

BC's Farming and Food Future

Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production

Community Farms Program



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The Land Conservancy (*TLC*) is a non-profit, charitable land trust protecting natural areas, heritage landmarks, and agricultural lands throughout British Columbia. *TLC*'s agricultural mandate is to protect farmland for sustainable, local food production. We own title or hold covenants on farmland, arrange long-term farm leases for new farmers, and provide information and education to farmers, local food groups, and communities.

FarmFolk/CityFolk Society is a non-profit society that works with farm and city to cultivate a local, sustainable food system. We develop and operate projects that provide access to and protection of foodlands; support local, small scale growers and producers; and educate, communicate, and celebrate with local food communities.



BC's Farming and Food Future

Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production

December 2009

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for

The Land Conservancy of BC

and

FarmFolk/City Folk



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Vancity

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The Community Farms Program brings together landowners, farmers, local communities, and resources to develop and support community farms in BC.

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Prologue

BC's Farming and Food Future: Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production shares innovative and effective actions that are being taken in British Columbia, Canada, and elsewhere to promote sustainable local food production.

It offers tools and advocacy ideas to help regional board members, area directors, municipal councillors, and local government staff and planners create a favourable environment for local and sustainable food production.

Background

The Land Conservancy of BC's Agricultural Program has a mandate to "protect farmland for farming". It focuses on conserving farmland for the long term to grow food for BC residents, using eco-friendly practices and facilitating access to land for new farmers.

In 2008, The Land Conservancy of BC (*TLC*) was invited to join the Farmland Economic Viability Ad Hoc Review Committee, supporting the revision of the Central Saanich Official Community Plan. *TLC* contributed a small toolkit for Central Saanich that outlined how local government could support the economic viability of local agriculture.

Response to the toolkit was enthusiastic, and a variety of individuals and organizations requested that it be expanded for local governments across BC.

TLC created *BC's Farming and Food Future: A Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production* with generous support from the Real Estate Foundation of BC and Vancity Community Foundation.

IMPORTANT

The views expressed in this document are those of The Land Conservancy of BC. Any errors and omissions are solely the responsibility of The Land Conservancy of BC.

The Land Conservancy of BC offers this information with the understanding that we do not render legal, accounting, or other specific professional advice.

This document does not constitute legal or other professional advice in connection with specific properties or specific transactions.

It is essential that local governments and others considering measures to protect and support agriculture in their area consult with appropriate professional and legal advisers.

Executive Summary

“Food is not a commodity. It is the very basis of life.”

Dr. Vandana Shiva

Food is a necessity. Food is linked to our health and well-being through what we eat, how it is produced, and how we value it within our families and communities.

Sustainable food production is a vital component of a community’s food system. It influences a community’s well-being, and it needs to be supported and enhanced by local governments.

Communities are becoming increasingly concerned about where their food comes from and how it is grown. Sustainable food production is as important to community well-being as housing, transportation, health, recreation, environment, and safety.

The full value of food production to community health and well-being is often not recognized or taken into account in decision-making. Incorporating food systems thinking into local government policy, planning, and programs can be challenging because the food system touches on so many sectors, including land, water, transportation, housing, business, and health.

Importance of local food

Nine-in-ten (91%) residents agree that “it is important that BC produce enough food so we don’t have to depend on imports from other places”. This is an increase of eight points from 2004.

Source: *Poll of public opinions toward agriculture, food and agri-food production in BC*. 2008. IPSOS Reid Public Affairs. Prepared for the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

BC’s Farming and Food Future

We offer *BC’s Farming and Food Future: A Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production* to local governments. This resource supports municipalities and regional districts with tools to encourage sustainable food production for the benefit of your community.

It will help you:

- create a favourable environment for sustainable food production;
- take a lead role in encouraging and supporting sustainable food production in BC.

As well as providing tools, the Toolkit suggests how you can advocate for policies and programs that support local agriculture.

It also gives basic information and resources about the state of agriculture in BC. This information will help staff respond to information requests from Council and the public, and integrate food production into policy, planning, and programs.

The Toolkit focuses on farm-based agriculture, but the tools, information, and resources can be applied to urban food production.

The Toolkit is divided into five sections:

Part I: Sustainable Food Production in BC

This section provides an overview of the importance of sustainable food production, including benefits and challenges.

Part II: Supporting Sustainable Agriculture

This section introduces important elements to consider when integrating sustainable food production into local government policies, planning, and programs.

Part III: Tools

This section describes tools (including resources and examples) that local governments can use to support sustainable food production in their communities.

Part IV: Advocacy Items

This section highlights policies and programs that support sustainable food production in BC. Local governments can put these ideas forward to neighbouring jurisdictions, professional associations, and other levels of government.

Part V: Resources

This section gives planners, staff, and councillors/ directors additional resources to help incorporate sustainable food production into community planning.

Why sustainable food production?

Sustainable food production contributes economic, social, and environmental benefits to your community. It can help improve community health, contribute to the local economy, and provide environmental goods and services.

Sustainable food production helps secure a supply of food for local and neighbouring communities. It also keeps your food system resilient in the face of influences such as climate change and changing energy prices.

Integrating food production into policy, planning, and programs can help you take a pro-active, whole-system approach to delivery of services. As a local government, you have an opportunity to help develop a network of sustainable food production systems throughout BC.

Challenges for sustainable food production

Sustainable, long-term food production in BC faces a number of inter-related challenges, including access to land and water, an aging farm population, and the difficulty of making a living at farming.

In BC, our limited farmland is threatened in part by strong and growing urban development pressure, and high land prices, which can limit opportunities to purchase farmland for food production.

Sustainable food production relies on access to water for irrigation. BC appears to have an abundance of freshwater, but there are competing interests (e.g. urban, industry, agriculture, fish) for water, especially in the southern regions.

BC's farm population is aging, and a declining number of young people are entering the industry. Currently, many BC farmers face higher inflation on expenses than on earnings from farming. Many farmers turn to off-farm employment to subsidize their farming activities. This is not a climate that encourages people to enter the business of farming.

As communities, we need to ask how we can incorporate the true costs of food production (economic, social, and environmental) into the price of food to ensure that farmers receive a fair income and that all members of the community have access to healthy food.

If food production is not an economically profitable enterprise, the future of food production in BC is questionable.

Supporting sustainable community food systems

Local governments have an important role to play to address these challenges and create lasting community benefits.

Agriculture needs to be included in planning and decision-making frameworks. Responsibility for agriculture rests with all levels of government in Canada.

Local governments have a significant influence on sustainable food production and food systems.

To help ensure that your efforts to support sustainable food production in your community are successful, take time to develop community commitment, set goals and objectives that are appropriate for your community, and communicate your successes.

BC's Farming and Food Future: Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production

Table 1. Summary of Tools

Tool	Description	Activities	Tool in Action
Tool 1 Public Awareness, Education, and Communication	Communication and education techniques to increase public awareness about the importance and benefits of agriculture, and encourage people to buy locally and sustainably produced food	Post agriculture web pages. Host zoning and land use workshops. Sponsor events. Report indicator results.	Town of Spallumcheen web site City of Surrey web site City of Portland web site Flavours of Surrey Circle Farm Tours North Okanagan Food Portal
Tool 2 Food Charter (FC)	Method to define, summarize, and formally endorse important community food values	Form a Food Policy Council. Initiate or support FC process. Include sustainable food production in FC. Endorse and use FC. Incorporate FC in community planning activities.	Northern Regional Districts Regional Food Charter (Vancouver Island) Kaslo Food Charter
Tool 3 Food System Assessment (FSA)	Method to assess the assets, strengths, and vulnerabilities of your food system and recommend appropriate actions	Initiate FSA. Include sustainable food production in FSA. Use a food charter to guide FSA. Integrate FSA in community planning activities.	Vancouver Coastal Health – Community Food Action Initiative reports Capital Region – Baseline Assessment of Food Security
Tool 4 Agriculture Area Plan (AAP)	Process to guide agricultural decision-making in farming areas	Complete an AAP. Designate AAP staff.	Saltspring Island Area Farm Plan Electoral Area C (Oliver) – Agriculture Area Plan
Tool 5 Advisory Committees and Task Forces	Framework to provide advice and recommendations about food and agricultural issues to local government staff and elected officials, and facilitate communication between government and local communities	Establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). Establish or adopt a Food Policy Council. Establish a focused task force.	District of Lake County AAC Vancouver Food Policy Council BC's Ranching Task Force
Tool 6 Official Community Plan (OCP)	Process for including information and policies about agricultural lands in your Official Community Plan	Include statements that support agriculture in OCP. Restrict additional installment of infrastructure in agriculture areas. Direct purchasing to sustainable, local food, and other agricultural products.	Central Saanich – Strengthening agriculture through the OCP review process
Tool 7 Food Procurement Policy	Technique for local government to define what kind of food its institutions will purchase, and how	Develop food procurement policies. Specify exemptions for food where purchase price may influence availability.	City of Toronto – Local food policy Town of Markham and Local Food Plus

Community Farms Program

Tool	Description	Activities	Tool in Action
Tool 8 Zoning	Framework for local governments to regulate and support agricultural land use	Zone to support alternative farm models. Zone for housing. Restrict farm home plate. Zone to support agriculture-related activities. Rezone in exchange for voluntary amenity contributions.	Haliburton Community Organic Farm – Zoning for alternative farm models Pitt Meadows – Home plate restrictions
Tool 9 Amenity Density Bonus Provision	Process to develop agricultural benefits using amenity contributions from non-agricultural developments	Provide permanent farmers' market facilities. Obtain funds to purchase farmland. Provide land to a farmland trust or other organization for farming and farming activities.	Salt Spring Island – Land for community agriculture
Tool 10 Local Conservation Fund	Method to use parcel tax to fund acquisition and conservation of sustainable farms and the environmental benefits they provide	Provide matching grants for region-based projects. Purchase land for joint conservation/ food production Purchase covenants on farmland.	Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund Capital Regional District Land Acquisition Fund
Tool 11 Leasehold Subdivision	Process for local government to grant subdivision approval to food producers who want to lease part of a parcel of agricultural land for longer than three years	Establish a policy that supports leasehold subdivision applications for farmland. Recommend applications for leasehold subdivision to the ALC.	
Tool 12 Government Land Lease	Process for local government to lease land for food production, support sustainable uses of public land, and protect and enhance the environment	Identify suitable lands for lease or rent. Provide long-term leases for sustainable food production. Set environmental guidelines in leases.	District of Saanich – Farm lease Lincoln Conservation Commission
Tool 13 Infrastructure	Opportunities for local government to develop and support local infrastructure associated with food production	Encourage food production infrastructure. Incorporate infrastructure requirements into planning and regulatory processes.	Saskatoon Farmers' Market Maple Ridge Agriculture Area Plan development process
Tool 14 Extension Services	Method for local governments to provide professional agricultural support and resources to farmers and communities	Hire agrologist staff. Partner with neighbouring jurisdictions to share costs and services. Partner with agencies to deliver programs and workshops. Provide web resources.	District of Summerland – Agricultural irrigation workshop Regional District of Central Okanagan – Agriculture Support Officer 100 Mile House – Agriculture Enterprise Development Centre

BC's Farming and Food Future: Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production

Tool	Description	Activities	Tool in Action
Tool 15 Riparian Area Tax Exemption	Process for local governments to exempt property taxes on protected riparian areas of agricultural land	Identify effective areas for riparian tax exemption. Enact a Riparian Area Tax Exemption bylaw. Review conservation covenants for eligibility. Recommend ALC approval to register conservation covenants on ALR land.	Town of Gibsons – Tax Exemption (Riparian Property) Bylaw
Tool 16 Water Management	Activities for local management and monitoring of water quantity and quality to benefit sustainable food production	Collect information about water needs. Develop Water Use Plan. Include agriculture representatives in decisions about water. Evaluate other water uses for efficiency. Review water rates within and between districts for disparities. Make reclaimed water available for irrigation. Hold irrigation workshops. Promote riparian area tax exemption.	Capital Regional District – Agricultural Water Use and Conservation Study District of Summerland – Trout Creek Water Use Plan City of Vernon – Water reclamation and irrigation

Table 2. Summary of Advocacy Items

Item	Description	Advocate to	Idea in Action
Advocacy Item 1 Policy Guidelines on Agricultural Land Protection	Advocacy to professional associations to develop standardized policy guides that support agricultural land protection	Planning Institute of BC Canadian Institute of Planners BC Institute of Agrologists Union of BC Municipalities Local Government Management Association	American Planning Association – Policy Guide on Agricultural Land Preservation
Advocacy Item 2 Tax Exemption for Ecologically Sensitive Areas	Advocacy to amend provincial legislation to allow local governments to establish bylaws exempting ecologically sensitive areas from municipal property tax	Ministry of Community Development Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Ministry of Environment	Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program
Advocacy Item 3 Accounting for Ecological Goods and Services	Advocacy to senior government that their regulations, policies, and programs recognize, value, and compensate farmers for the provision of public ecological goods and services	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Ministry of Environment Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust Prince Edward Island – Alternative Land Use Services International ecological goods and services policies and programs

Fast facts

- 5% of BC's land base is suitable for farming, 1% is considered high quality.¹
- As of 2008, there were 4.7 million hectares in the ALR; 50% are in the North.²
- All 27 regional districts and 107 municipalities have land in the ALR.³
- The ALR tends to coincide with BC's areas of highest species richness.⁴
- There were 19,844 BC farms in 2006, a 2.2% decrease from 2001.⁵
- There were 29,870 BC farm operators in 2006, a 1.5% decline from 2001.⁶
- 53 years was the median age of BC farmers in 2006.⁷
- Farms saw \$2.7 billion total gross farm receipts and \$2.4 billion in operating expenses in 2006, an increase from \$2.3 billion gross farm receipts and \$2.1 billion in operating expenses in 2000.⁸
- Farm operators were spending an average of 90 cents in expenses (excluding depreciation) for every dollar of receipts in 2005.⁹
- In 2006, BC had the largest Canadian area in production for apricots, raspberries and cranberries.¹⁰
- BC is third in terms of total hectares of vegetables, behind Ontario and Quebec. The province reported 6,957 hectares in 2006, down 4.4% since 2001.¹¹
- Total cattle and calves declined 1.7% to 800,855 head from 2000 to 2006. They represent 5.1% of total cattle and calves in Canada.¹²
- 16.3% of BC farms reported organic production and 455 BC farms were certified organic in 2007.¹³

For more information on the state of agriculture in BC, see Appendix A.

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1. Smart Growth BC. n.d. *Agricultural Lands*. Retrieved July 9, 2009 from www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/AboutUs/Issues/AgriculturalLand/tabid/111/Default.aspx
 2. Agricultural Land Commission. 2009. Table 1: Area Included and Excluded from the ALR by Year, in hectares. Retrieved July 9, 2009 from www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/stats/Table1_incl-excl_allyears_d.htm
 3. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. n.d. *Province of British Columbia Agriculture in Brief*. Retrieved August 1, 2009 from www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/agbriefs/BC.pdf
 4. Canada-British Columbia EFP Biodiversity Steering Committee. 2008. *Planning for Biodiversity: A Guide for BC Farmers and Ranchers*. BC Agriculture Council.
 5. Statistics Canada. 2008. *Census of Agriculture counts 19,844 farms in British Columbia*. Retrieved August 31, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/analysis-analyses/bc-cb-eng.htm
 6. *ibid.*
 7. Statistics Canada. 2008. *Farm operators by sex and age, by province (2001 and 2006 Census of Agriculture) (British Columbia)*. Retrieved August 31, 2009 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/agrc18k-eng.htm
 8. *Census of Agriculture counts 19,844 farms in British Columbia*. Retrieved August 31, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/analysis-analyses/bc-cb-eng.htm
Statistics Canada. 2003. *Moderate decline in British Columbia farms*. Retrieved August 31, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2001/first-premier/regions/farmbc-fermecb-eng.htm
 9. Statistics Canada. 2008. *Census of Agriculture counts 19,844 farms in British Columbia*. Retrieved August 31, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/analysis-analyses/bc-cb-eng.htm
 10. *ibid*
 11. *ibid*
 12. *ibid*
 13. *ibid*

Acronyms

AAC	Agricultural Advisory Committee
AAP	Agricultural Area Plan
AEDC	Agriculture Enterprise Development Centre
AFP	Area Farm Plan
AIT	Agreement on Internal Trade
ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
ALUS	Alternate Land Use Services
ARDCorp	BC Agriculture Research and Development Corporation
BCAC	BC Agriculture Council
BCAFM	BC Association of Farmers' Markets
BCREA	BC Real Estate Association
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis
CFAI	Community Food Action Initiative
COABC	Certified Organic Associations of BC
CR-FAIR	Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable
CSA	Community Supported (or Shared) Agriculture
EGS	Ecological Goods and Services
FFCF	FarmFolk/CityFolk Society
FPC	Food Policy Council
FSA	Food System Assessment
MAL	BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
MIR	Meat Inspection Regulation
NATEP	Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program
OCP	Official Community Plan
OKIM	Okanagan Irrigation Management
SPC	Smart Planning for Communities
SSFPA	Small Scale Food Producers Association
TILMA	Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement
TLC	The Land Conservancy of British Columbia

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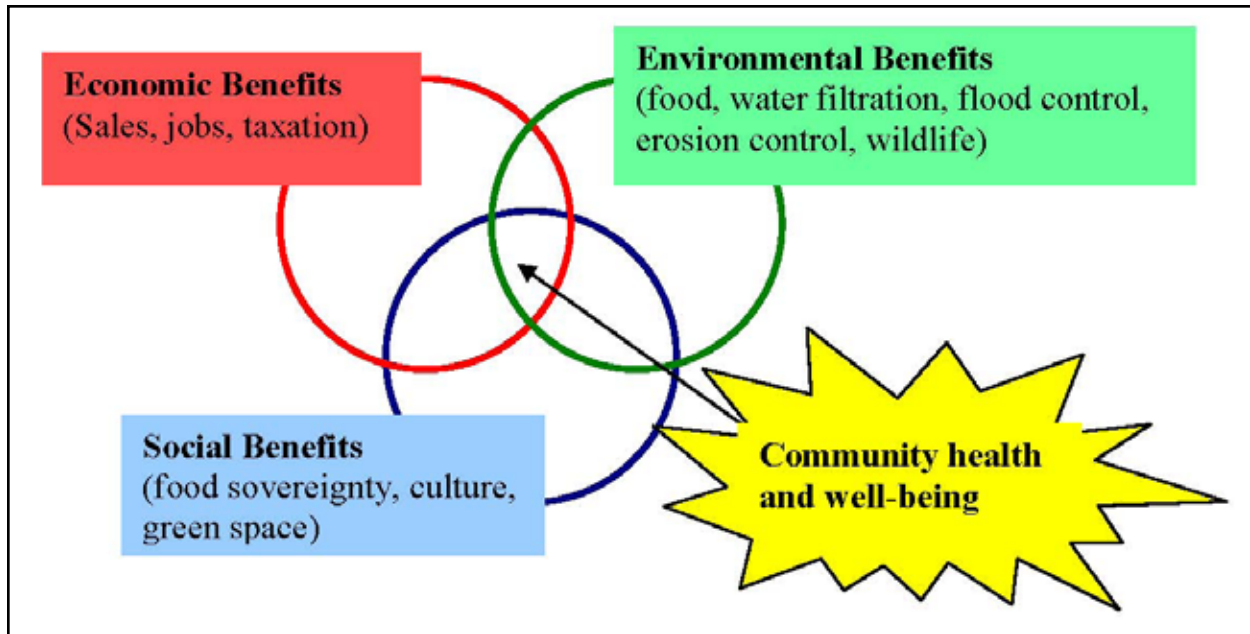


Figure 1. Benefits of sustainable food production

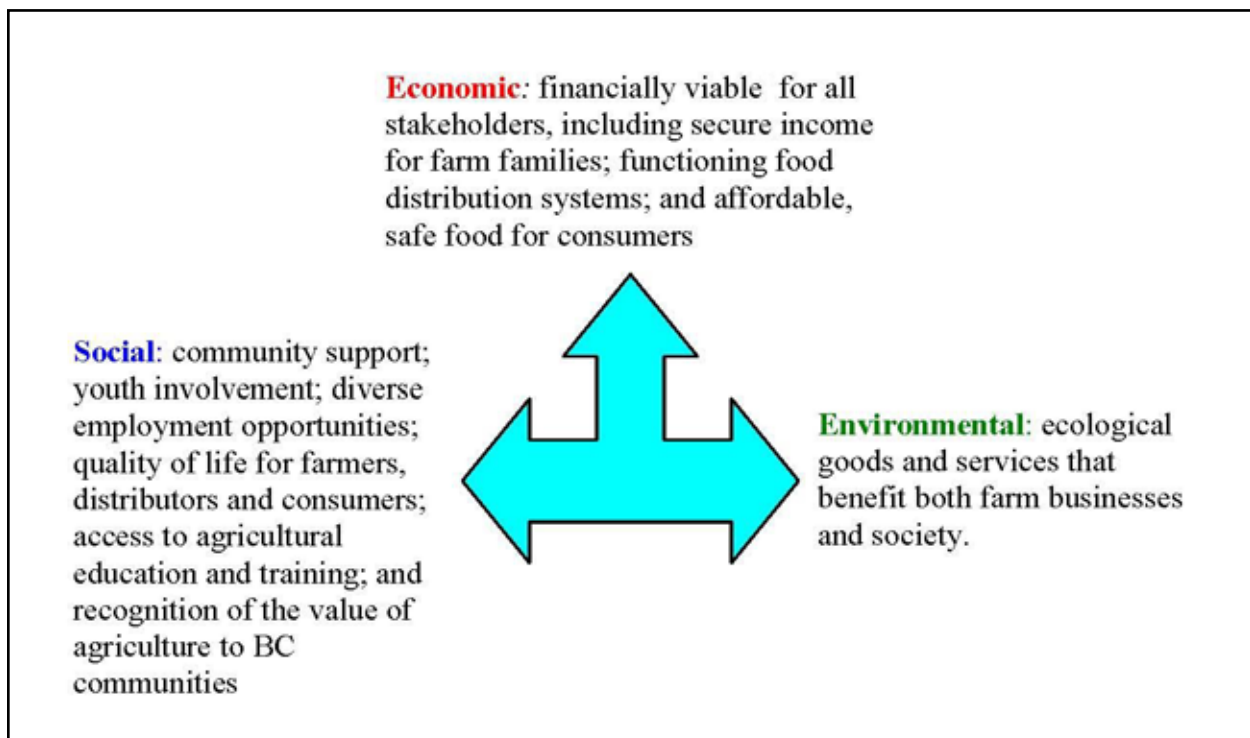


Figure 2. What is sustainable food production?

Part I: Sustainable Food Production in BC

The more we know about our food system, the more we are called into complex choices.

Barbara Kingsolver

This section describes sustainable food production and why it's important, and identifies some of the challenges it faces in BC.

We all need food. We can choose how it is produced and where it comes from. As a local government, you have an important role supporting sustainable food production in your community.

Sustainable food production has multiple, interacting benefits that contribute to community health and well-being (see Figure 1, Benefits of sustainable agriculture).

By planning for a diverse food production system, local governments help farmers reduce financial risk and provide a hedge against drought, pest infestations, diseases, and other natural factors that can reduce production.

What is sustainable food production?

Sustainable food production means using farming practices “. . . that meet current and future societal needs for food . . . , for ecosystem services, and for healthy lives, and that do so by maximizing the net benefit to society when all costs and benefits of the practices are considered.”¹

Because sustainable food production is diverse (crop types, scale and type of production), it is resilient to changes in climate, pests, diseases, and public need.

Diversity of operations reduce economic pressures for farmers when commodity prices drop, the price of inputs increases (e.g. seeds, fuel, fertilizers, pesticides), and regulations change. And, a diverse and resilient local farming system helps provide communities with an on-going supply of food.

Benefits

Sustainable agriculture contributes to the overall health and well-being of our communities through an interaction of economic, social and environmental benefits (see Figure 2, What is sustainable food production?).

Sustainable agriculture at Intervale Center

The Intervale Center manages 350 acres of farmland, trails, and wildlife corridors along the Winooski River in Burlington, Vermont. Intervale's unique model is built around “. . . healthy, locally-grown food, systems for recycling organic waste, and a financially viable and environmentally sound agricultural economy.”

Business activities include Agricultural Development Services for the Chittenden County foodshed, a native tree and shrub nursery, a compost business, historic farmstead site for the public, a new Food Enterprises Center, and 13 independent farm businesses in various stages of development.

For more information about this model of sustainable food production, see www.intervale.org/index.shtml.

1. Tilman, D., Cassman, K., Matson, P., Naylor, R. & Polasky, S. 2002. *Agricultural sustainability and intensive production practices*. Nature, 418, 671-677.

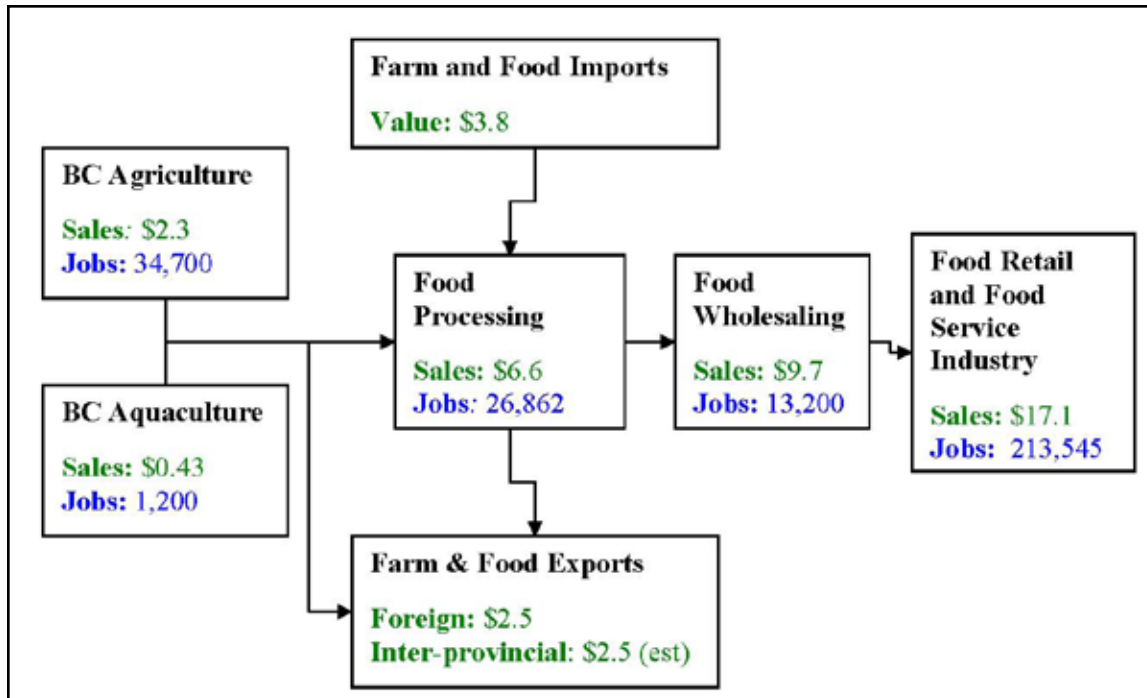


Figure 3. Overview of BC's agriculture economy (2006) (dollars in billions)

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. 2007. *Fast Stats: agriculture, aquaculture and food 2007*.

1. Economic and Fiscal Benefits

The agriculture sector in BC makes a substantial contribution to employment and our economy. In 2006, consumer sales totalled \$22.1 billion dollars, and the agriculture system provided 290,407 jobs.² In 2008, the agriculture sector generated over \$2.6 billion in farm cash receipts.³

BC Stats forecasts that agriculture will become BC's largest primary industry employer as employment in forestry, fishing, and mining declines.⁴ For more information on the BC food sector economy and jobs, see Figure 3, Overview of BC's agriculture economy (2006).

Sustainable local food production can help keep money in your community through direct sales and local jobs.⁵

Farmers' market sales

A study from the BC Association of Farmers' Markets and the University of Northern British Columbia shows that BC shoppers spend \$65.3 million directly at farmers' markets, and another \$53.2 million at neighbouring businesses.

Source: Connell, D. J., Taggart, T., Hillman K., and Humphrey, A. 2006. *Economic and community impacts of farmers' markets in British Columbia*. British Columbia Association of Farmers' Markets and the School of Environmental Planning, University of Northern British Columbia.

2. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. 2007. *Fast Stats: agriculture, aquaculture and food 2007*.

3. BC Stats. 2009. *Selected economic statistics for British Columbia*. Retrieved October 19, 2009 from www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/handout/selection.pdf.

4. BC Stats. 2009. *Labour Force Statistics: June 2009*. Retrieved October 19, 2009 from www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/lfs/lfs0906.pdf.

5. Local multiplier effect: how many times dollars are re-circulated within a local economy before leaving the community through outside spending.

Agriculture net tax

A study in Pitt Meadows and Abbotsford demonstrated that agriculture is the second largest contributor of net tax to local governments (after business) while residential areas are the biggest users of tax revenue.

Source: Coast Region and Resource Management Branch. 2005. *Direct financial contribution of farming areas to local government in British Columbia: A pilot project in Pitt Meadows and Abbotsford.* Strengthening Farming Report 860.600-1. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

Community kitchens

There are over 500 community kitchens in BC. They are primarily organized to help community members who are facing financial challenges and struggling to feed their families a healthy diet. Kitchens also focus on expanding social circles, multicultural interaction, and building capacity.

Source: BC Institute for Co-operative Studies. n.d. *The Canadian community kitchen movement.* University of Victoria. Retrieved July 27, 2009 from www.bcics.org/node/154.

It is worthwhile to evaluate the economic, social, and environmental contributions of different businesses for long-range community planning. However, the monetary costs and benefits associated with environmental and social outcomes from sustainable food production do not show up directly on balance sheets like taxes, manufactured goods, or commercial services.

This means it's difficult to incorporate the diverse benefits of sustainable food production into decision making when it comes to discussion of dollars and cents. It also means that working landscapes typically are not managed to take advantage of these benefits.

2. Social Benefits

Sustainable food production has direct and indirect social benefits for local citizens. These benefits can be difficult to quantify, but are tangible nonetheless.

Many social benefits are a result of agriculture's economic and environmental benefits. For example, economic benefits provide adequate income, while environmental benefits such as clean air, water, and access to fresh produce support community health.

Sustainable food production creates social opportunities for many people. Community members shop at farmers' markets and attend seasonal celebrations, such as farm festivals. Some farms provide recreational and education opportunities for communities through events, tours, and workshops.

A strong agricultural base can open avenues for development of community kitchens and processing facilities that enable access to food and provide community building for some of society's most vulnerable members.

Food is an integral part of all cultures, and food production in your area can bring cultures together. Sustainable food production also contributes to cultural heritage, scenic views, open space, and community character. All these factors add to a community's liveability.

Food and Health in BC

\$1.8 billion	BC health care costs attributed to overweight/ obesity, lack of physical activity, and smoking
1/3	Number of cancers that could be avoided by eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, minimizing saturated fats and trans fats, maintaining a normal weight, and exercising regularly
1/3	Amount of children's daily energy requirements now met through processed food
1 in 5	Number of children living in poverty in BC. Poverty reduces access to healthy food and can impede intellectual and physical development.

Source: British Columbia. Provincial Health Officer. 2006. *Food, Health and Well-Being in British Columbia.* Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report 2005. BC Ministry of Health.

The Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Project (FMNCP)

Not all community members can afford to access the benefits of farmers' markets. The BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM) is working on increasing access to fresh BC farm products for low income pregnant women and low income families with children.

The FMNCP started as a pilot project in 2007 with five communities. In 2009, 15 communities participated in the project (three communities from each regional health authority).

Farmers' markets are matched with one or more community organization(s) that deliver cooking and skill building programs. Coupons are distributed weekly to participating families as part of the cooking and skill building programs. Families are able to use the coupons to purchase market-fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs, dairy, fish, poultry, nuts, and fresh herbs. The coupons are treated like cash, but no change is given when the purchase falls below the value of the coupon(s) used.

Local governments can support these types of programs by providing venues for farmers' markets. You can also contact the BCAFM to learn more about how you can support the program (www.bcfarmersmarket.org/).

Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI)

CFAI is a health promotion initiative that is based on a partnership of BC's six health authorities and the BC Ministry of Health. The program is funded by the Ministry of Health, implemented by regional health authorities, and coordinated by the Provincial Health Services Authority.

The CFAI program aims to increase food security for BC citizens by increasing:

- awareness about food security;
- access to local healthy food;
- food knowledge and skills;
- community capacity to address local food security;
- development and use of policy that supports community food security.

The success of this initiative will partially depend on the retention of farmers and farmland to ensure there is access to local, healthy food [emphasis added].

Public amenity benefits

In Abbotsford (2007), it was estimated that the value of the stream of public amenity benefits and ecological services provided by each acre of farmland was \$29,490. Specific ecological services and amenity benefits included in this study were: riparian habitat, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, local food production, access to farm-based recreation, and scenic views.

Source: BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. 2007. *Public amenity benefits and ecological services provided by farmland to local communities in the Fraser Valley – A case study in Abbotsford, BC.* Strengthening Farming Report, File Number 800.100-1.

Ontario agricultural eco-services

Ontario's agricultural lands in the Greenbelt have an estimated non-market value of \$329 million per year. This includes cropland, idle land, hedgerows, and orchards. Significant values include the pollination value of idle land and hedgerows, storage of carbon in soils, and cultural values.

Source: Wilson, S. 2008. *Ontario's wealth, Canada's future: Appreciating the value of the Greenbelt's eco-services.* David Suzuki Foundation.

On a larger scale, sustainable food production helps secure a supply of food for local and neighbouring communities. It also keeps your food system resilient in the face of future influences that cannot yet be clearly forecast, such as climate change (see Appendix B) and changing energy prices.

3. Environmental Benefits

Farmland used for sustainable food production can provide communities with numerous environmental benefits.

Ecosystems are made up of plants, animals, water, soils, and air, and their interactions. They provide goods and services that are necessary for human well-being (see Table 3).

Table 3. Examples of ecosystems and associated goods and services

Ecosystem	Ecological Goods and Services
Forest	Carbon storage and sequestration, soil formation, waste treatment, biological control, cultural, air quality, stormwater control, recreation, raw material (timber), genetic resources
Grassland, rangeland	Carbon storage and sequestration, water regulation, erosion control, soil formation, waste treatment, pollination, biological control, food production
Wetland	Disturbance regulation, water supply and treatment, food production, recreation, culture
Lakes, rivers, riparian zones	Water supply, waste treatment, food production, recreation, total ecosystem
Cropland	Food production, habitat/ refuge, scenic
Undeveloped land	Scenic

Source: Olewiler, N. 2004. *The value of natural capital in settled areas of Canada.* Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Farmland in BC, especially in high population areas, can play an important role in providing communities with ecological goods and services. For example, BC's prime agricultural land generally coincides with the highest levels of species richness in the province (e.g. Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Okanagan). These are also the areas under the greatest pressure from urban expansion.

Agriculture both relies on and protects biodiversity. For more information about biodiversity and farming, see the Environmental Farm Plan guide, *Planning for Biodiversity: A Guide for BC Farmers and Ranchers*.⁶

Around the world, scientists are testing different methodologies to put a dollar value to these ecological goods and services. See sidebar for examples of valuing ecological goods and services.

6. www.ardcorp.ca/index.php?page_id=39

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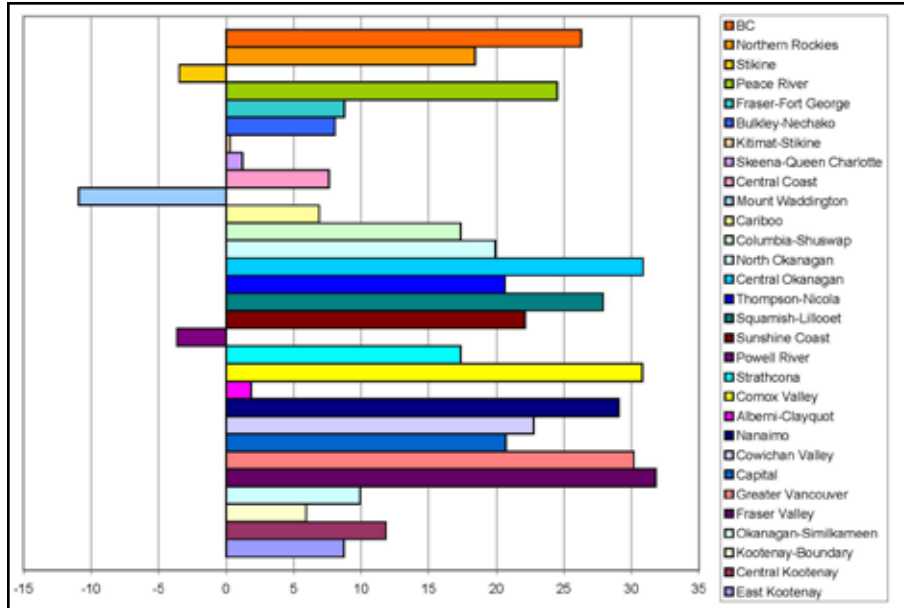


Figure 4. Projected population growth of regional districts (2009-2036)

Source: BC Stats. July 2009. British Columbia Population Projections. PEOPLE Projection 34. Retrieved October 15, 2009 from www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DATA/POP/pop/popproj.asp.

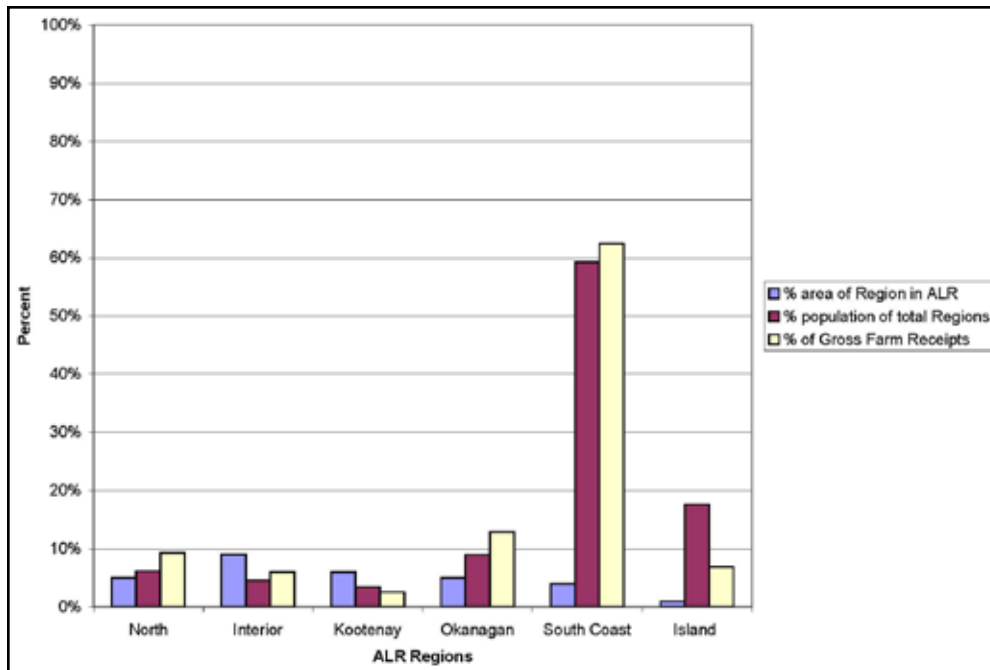


Figure 5. Percentage ALR, population, and gross farm receipts in BC

Sources: Agricultural Land Commission. 2008. *2008/09 Business Plan*. Retrieved July 29, 2009 from www.alc.gov.bc.ca/

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. 2008. *Agriculture in Brief*. Retrieved July 29, 2009 from www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm

Challenges

Food production in BC faces a number of challenges that need to be addressed before extensive, long-term production is possible. Many of these inter-related challenges are not new, and have been discussed since the 1970's.

These challenges include access to land and water, an aging farm population, and the difficulty of making a living at farming.

Table 4. Sustainability challenges

1. Land	Access to affordable land; farmland in food production
2. Water	Access to constant water supply; adequate water quality
3. Farmers	Continued generations of farmers
4. Economics	Economic profitability of farming

Local governments have a role to play in addressing these challenges and supporting successful food production.

See Appendix A for a more detailed overview of the current state of food production in BC (land base, farms and production, farmers, farm finances, environmental farm practices).

For a summary of agriculture statistics of individual regions and communities, see *Agriculture in Brief*. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm).

1. Land

BC has a limited amount of land suitable for agriculture (less than 5% of our land base), and its availability for food production is decreasing.

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial tool for protecting farm and ranch land. However, it does not address some key land-related issues:

- Land can be withdrawn from the ALR for uses other than agriculture.
- Access to land by farmers is not assured because land in the ALR is owned by non-farmers.
- Land can be taken out of food production.
- Good land stewardship practices that provide ecological goods and services are not addressed.⁷

In parts of BC, the favourable climate, fertile soils, and accessible water sources of valley bottoms and benchlands create a desirable area for both farming and urban development. For example, Southern

7. For more information about the ALR, see www.alc.gov.bc.ca/. A review of the ALR can be downloaded from the David Suzuki Foundation (www.davidsuzuki.org/Economy/Sustainability/alr_report.asp).

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Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, and Okanagan have very favourable soils and climate for food production.

This small land base is also under pressure from a growing population and associated development (see Figure 4, Projected population growth of regional districts, 2009-2036). The Okanagan Valley and south-western BC account for less than 3% of BC's land area, are home to 80% of BC's population, and generate over 80% of BC's annual gross farm receipts (see Figure 5, Percentage ALR, population, and gross farm receipts in BC).⁸

There is a third factor to consider – these lands hold some of BC's most species-rich habitats.⁹

In other parts of BC (e.g. interior and northern regions), farmers and ranchers face pressures to find alternative land uses to food production (such as subdivision and recreational uses of grasslands) to stay in business.

Along with a limited amount of farmland available for food production, farmers in some areas of BC also face high land costs. It can be difficult for new farmers to acquire farmland because land is selling for approximately \$74,000 to \$247,000 per hectare in some parts of BC.¹⁰

In Saanich, land prices have risen from an average of \$25,480 per hectare (1974) to \$304,851 (2005) to \$666,504 per hectare (2006). At this price level, few agricultural activities can cover the opportunity cost of land.¹¹

A study conducted in Saanich concluded that there may be speculation taking place on some parcels of ALR land. Alternatively, higher prices per hectare may signify that farmland is being bought for residential purposes.¹²

8. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. n.d. *Edge Planning*. Retrieved August 18, 2009 from www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/edge/index.htm.

9. The Canada-British Columbia EFP Biodiversity Steering Committee. 2008. *Planning for Biodiversity: A Guide for BC Farmers and Ranchers*. BC Agriculture Council.

10. For example, *Price of Farmland Soars*, Vancouver Sun, May 23, 2008) notes that farmland that was selling for \$25,000 an acre in the Fraser Valley is now on the market at \$50,000 to \$80,000 an acre.

11. Cotteleer, G., Stobbe, T., van Kooten, G.C. 2007. *Bayesian model averaging in the context of spatial hedonic pricing*. An application to farmland values. Working Paper. Resource, Economic, and Policy Analysis (REPA) Group, University of Victoria.

12. *ibid.*

A Canada-wide study shows that urbanization may increase the value of farmland.¹³

In summary, although the ALR provides some protection for BC's limited amount of farmland:

- there is no requirement that farmland be kept in production;
- there is strong and growing urban development pressure on some of BC's best farmland, which also coincides with the highest levels of species diversity in the province;
- land prices can limit purchase of farmland for food production.

2. Water

Sustainable food production relies on access to water for irrigation. BC appears to have an abundance of freshwater – 25% of all the freshwater in Canada and 5% of freshwater globally.¹⁴

However, there are competing interests for water (e.g. urban, industrial, agricultural, fish), especially in the southern regions.

According to *BC's Food Self-Reliance: Can BC's Farmers Feed Our Growing Population*¹⁵, approximately 281,000 hectares will need access to irrigation to meet BC's food needs in 2025. In 2005, approximately 189,000 hectares of farmland in BC had access to irrigation.

Dry regions in the interior of British Columbia and in the southern Prairies have most of the one million hectares of irrigated crop land in Canada. These areas also have severe soil moisture deficits at some time during most summers, and can suffer from long-term drought conditions.¹⁶

In some parts of BC, agriculture accounts for up to 70% of the surface and groundwater consumed.¹⁷

There continues to be technological and management advances in irrigation, which means water use continues to become more efficient. However, agriculture is only one demand on BC's water. As water availability decreases, it will become increasingly important to balance

13. "With respect to the other explanatory variables, the higher the population density, the higher farmland values, indicating that urbanization increases farmland values." Weerahewa, J., Meilke, K.D., Vyn, R.J. and Haq, Z. 2008. *The determinants of farmland values in Canada*. Canadian Agricultural Trade Policy Research Network Working Paper.

14. Nature Conservancy of Canada. 2006. *Freshwater 101*. Retrieved September 13, 2009 from www.natureconservancy.ca/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=9325&news_iv_ctrl=0&abbr=ncc_work.

15. BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

16. Environment Canada. 2008. *How much do we have?* Retrieved September 1, 2009 from www.ec.gc.ca/WATER/en/info/facts/e_quantity.htm.

17. Living WaterSmart. n.d. *Doing business differently*. Retrieved September 1, 2009 from www.livingwatersmart.ca/business/.

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water demands for food production with other uses.¹⁸

For more information on recent programs and projects related to agriculture and water, see *Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Management Plan*

(www.livingwatersmart.ca/business/agriculture.html).

In addition to availability, water quality is important for sustainable food production. For more information on the impact of agriculture practices on water and water systems, see *Watershed Stewardship: A Guide for Agriculture*, BC Stewardship Series (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/216753.pdf).

3. Farmers

BC's farm population is aging (the median age of BC farmers was 53 in 2006), and a declining number of young people are entering the industry.

The decline in young people entering farming may reflect the cost of entry into farming, low wages, uncontrollable risks (e.g. weather, disease outbreaks), the work experience required to be successful, and fewer children taking over the family farm. If this trend continues, BC will soon face a shortage of farmers.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported (or Shared) Agriculture programs allow consumers to purchase their food directly from farmers and invest in local food production. Consumers pre-purchase a share in the season's harvest, and receive regular deliveries of produce throughout the growing season.

CSAs:

- provide farmers with funds in the spring, a time of high input costs and low income;
- guarantee a market for a farm's produce;
- keep food dollars in the community;
- create a shared risk and reward system between farmers and consumers;
- provide consumers with fresh food;
- connect consumers with the land and farmers that provide their food;
- educate the community about food systems and the importance of food production to their health and well-being.

There are CSAs throughout BC. Examples include Bone Meadow Ranch and Gardens, Quesnel (www.bonemeadowranch.com/index.html); Klippers Organics, Similkameen Valley (<http://klippersorganics.com/>); and Nathan Creek Organic Farm, Langley (www.nathancreek.ca/).

For a listing of other CSAs, visit FarmFolk/CityFolk at www.ffcf.bc.ca/resources/kp/csa.html.

¹⁸ For example, electricity, drinking water, waste removal, landscaping, transportation, manufacturing, fishing, and recreation.

4. Economics

Currently, many BC farmers experience:

- higher rates of inflation on their expenses than on revenues;
- a need for off-farm employment.

See Appendix A for more information.

Farmers can also face a challenge accessing markets. Larger food retailers, where the majority of BC residents buy their food, generally do not deal with small and/ or local farmers because adequate volumes and quality control cannot be ensured. It may also be cheaper for these retail outlets to import food from outside of BC where production costs are lower.

As long as transportation remains relatively inexpensive, the main influence on the price of food will be production cost.

An important question faced by communities is how to incorporate the true costs of food production (economic, social, and environmental) into the price of food so farmers receive a fair income, while ensuring all members of the community can access healthy food.

For further information on farmers' share of food sales, see *The Farmers Share: Compare the Share Update 2006*, by Diane Martz, Centre for Rural Studies and Enrichment, St. Peter's College.

Sector specific issues can contribute to economic challenges for farmers:

- Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE)
An international trade ban on Canadian beef due to BSE in 2003 resulted in a significant impact on beef farm income.¹⁹
- Meat Inspection Regulation (MIR)
The Meat Inspection Regulation (MIR) was enacted between 2004 and 2007. It has a significant negative impact on small-lot livestock producers.²⁰ There are actions local governments can take to help mitigate the impact of the MIR.²¹

If food production is not an economically profitable enterprise, the future of food production in BC is questionable.

19. Statistics Canada. 2004. *Canada's beef cattle sector and the impact of BSE on farm family income*. Agriculture and Rural Working Paper Series. Working Paper No. 69. Statistics Canada, Agriculture Division.

20. Johnson, B. 2008. *Impact of the Meat Inspection Regulation on slaughter capacity in the North Okanagan Regional District (RDNO)*. North Okanagan Food Action Coalition.

21. Provincial Health Services Authority. 2009. *Local food, local meat*. Retrieved September 12, 2009 from www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/76D687CF-6596-46FE-AA9A-A536D61FB038/38210/LocalFoodLocalMeat.pdf.

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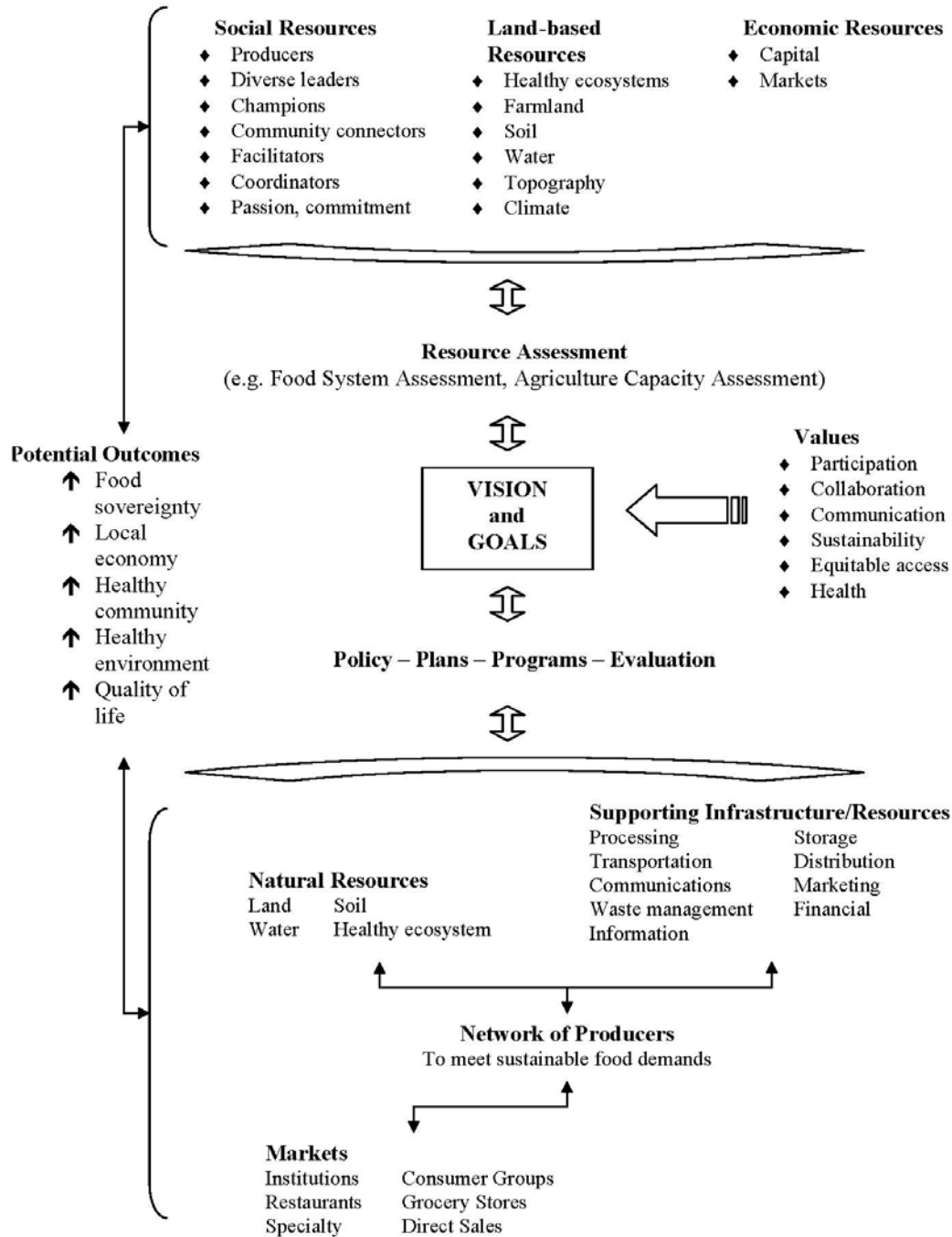


Figure 6. Developing a sustainable food production system

Adapted from: Value Chain Partnerships. 2006. *Developing a vibrant and sustainable regional food system: Suggestions for community-based groups* (www.valuechains.org/NR/rdonlyres/1F208B96-FA4D-46D8-84D7-8B8FEA5CA9F0/107446/web_2006aug.pdf)

Part II: Supporting Sustainable Agriculture

The planning function of local governments has a central, indeed critical, role to play in helping to create a regulatory climate that ensures preservation of the resource base and enhances the economic viability of farming. There is a clear need for agriculture to be firmly within the planning mainstream with far greater focus on agricultural issues.²²

Barry Smith

Planners normally focus on land use, housing, transportation, the environment, and the economy, including the linkages within and between them. Although food systems and sustainable food production are components of these systems, they seldom inform local government planning.

For a short discussion on this topic, see *The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field*. Pothukuchi, K. & Kaufman, J.L. 2000. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, v. 66, no. 2.

www.cityfarmer.org/foodplan.html

This section introduces important elements to consider when you integrate sustainable food production into your local government's policies, planning, and programs.

For a general overview of the sustainable food production system development process, see Figure 6, Developing a sustainable food production system.

To help ensure that your efforts to support sustainable food production in your community are successful, take time to:

- develop community commitment;
- establish goals and define objectives;
- communicate outcomes.

These key considerations will help you use the Tools presented in Part III.

Jurisdiction

Responsibility for agriculture rests with all levels of government in Canada.

*Capital Regional District: Agricultural Legal & Policy Scan (2009)*²³ provides an overview of the key legislation and policies affecting local agriculture. This report focuses specifically on clarifying local government jurisdiction. Local governments have significant influence on sustainable food production and food systems, and need to include agriculture in planning and decision-making frameworks.

22. Smith, B. 1998. *Planning for Agriculture*. Agricultural Land Commission.

(www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Publications/planning/pfa_main.htm)

Planning for Agriculture covers many of the basics of planning for sustainable food production.

23. Curran, D. 2009. *Capital Regional District: Agricultural legal & policy scan*. Prepared for the Capital Regional Districts Roundtable on the Environment, Food and Agriculture Subcommittee. Available in *What can and should local governments do to protect and enhance local agriculture*. 2009. CRD Roundtable on the Environment: Food and Agriculture Subcommittee (www.crd.bc.ca/rte/documents/RTAgriculturalLegalandPolicyAnalysis2009.pdf).

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Develop community commitment

To successfully establish a sustainable food system in your jurisdiction, you need to engage your community and help generate public commitment to a local, sustainable food culture. This is in addition to supportive policies, bylaws, and programs.

Community members need to understand and value how sustainable food production contributes to their individual and community well-being. It will be more difficult to build the economic and environmental framework required for sustainable food production if there is no community culture in place to support it.

To create this culture, citizens need to be actively and meaningfully included in processes that define your community's vision and plan its development.

As a local government, you can take a proactive approach and invite community members to help plan for sustainability. The relationships and support networks that are created within and between government and citizens will help you build a more 'liveable community'.

For resources on how to engage your community, see *Creating Healthy Communities: Tools and Actions to Foster Environments for Healthy Living*.²⁴

24. SmartGrowth BC. (www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=197)

Smart Planning for Communities

Smart Planning for Communities (SPC) is a BC-wide, collaborative initiative that provides resources and tools for planning socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally sustainable communities. SPC encourages collaboration among organizations and teams of people to develop and implement integrated strategies for a sustainable community.

SPC:

- provides advice and assistance for communities interested in developing and implementing sustainability plans or planning processes;
- assists communities to identify required support, opportunities for community engagement, and finding and accessing funding;
- hosts learning forums where public, private, and other organizations can share best practices and lessons learned in sustainability planning;
- responds to requests for technical assistance and provides in-house advice or connects communities with experts in the SPC Resource Network.

SPC is administered and delivered by the Fraser Basin Council with support from:

BC Hydro, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ducks Unlimited, BC Ministry of Community Development, BC Ministry of Environment, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Canadian Rural Partnership.

For more information, see www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/programs/smart_planning.html.

Set goals and objectives

Your efforts to support sustainable food production will be more effective if you evaluate the results of your activities. You can review food system activities when you evaluate your community sustainability plans.

It is easier to evaluate your results if you have set specific goals and objectives. You can measure your results against your objectives to determine how well you are meeting your goals.

Use these Tools to help structure and inform your evaluation:

- Tool 3: Food System Assessment
- Tool 4: Agriculture Area Plan

Communicate outcomes

When you measure your results, you create opportunities to communicate with the public. Specific goals and measures are concepts the public can readily understand and support.

Although many sustainability indicators have been developed and used in recent years²⁵, use of food system and food production indicators is relatively new, with many evaluation projects in the development stage.

Indicators will depend on your community goals and available data.

Sustainable food production indicators can be part of your regional State of the Environment Report. For example, the Capital Regional District includes local food production indicators that measure:

- land in the Agricultural Land Reserve;
- farming viability;
- organic farms;
- local food production.

The Vancouver Food Policy Council is developing the Food Secure Vancouver program to measure food security in Vancouver and the region and recommend priority food system and food security actions and policies.²⁶

25. e.g. Fraser Basin Council Sustainability Snap Shots (www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/publications/indicators.html).

26. Food Secure Vancouver Study, Vancouver Food Policy Council. info@vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca (www.vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca/)

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For information about other food system indicator projects, see:

Department for Food, Environment, and Rural Affairs. 2009. *Development of indicators for a sustainable food system.* (www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/pdf/food-indicators-0908.pdf)

Kellett, R., Fryer, S. & Budke, I. 2009. *Specification of indicators and selection methodology for a potential community demonstration project.* Report for CMHC/ NRCan (www.sxd.sala.ubc.ca/17_research%20roundtable/Food_pkg.pdf)

Value Chain Partnerships. 2006. *Developing a vibrant and sustainable regional food system: Suggestions for community-based groups.* (www.valuechains.org/NR/rdonlyres/1F208B96-FA4D-46D8-84D7-8B8FEA5CA9F0/107446/web_2006aug.pdf)

Wallace Center. n.d. *Charting growth: Sustainable food indicators.* (<http://www.wallacecenter.org/our-work/current-initiatives/sustainable-food-indicators/sustainable-indicators-report/draft-report-charting-growth-sustainable-food-indicators/>)



Part III: Tools

This section describes tools that local governments can use to support sustainable food production in their community.

These tools work most effectively when they are integrated into community planning.

When you integrate food systems thinking into your decision-making processes, you will discover how to best shape administrative and bylaw approaches and resources to reach your community goals.

Each Tool includes activities, resources, and examples of the Tool in use in BC, Canada, and internationally.

The Toolkit offers 16 tools:

Community awareness

Tool 1: Public Awareness, Education, and Communication

Community vision

Tool 2: Food Charter

Information and decision-making

Tool 3: Food System Assessment

Tool 4: Agricultural Area Plan

Tool 5: Advisory Committees and Task Forces

Policy

Tool 6: Official Community Plans

Tool 7: Food Procurement Policy

Bylaws

Tool 8: Zoning

Resources

Tool 9: Amenity Density Bonus Provision

Tool 10: Local Conservation Fund

Farmer support

Tool 11: Leasehold Subdivision

Tool 12: Government Land Lease

Tool 13: Infrastructure

Tool 14: Extension Services

Environment

Tool 15: Riparian Area Tax Exemption

Tool 16: Water Management

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The Toolkit includes a selection of tools from *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture*²⁷, with additional ideas about how they can be applied, new resources, and further examples of the Tools in Action.

As a local government, one of the first steps you can take to support agriculture is incorporating the planning recommendations in *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture*. While this resource primarily addresses land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), many of its tools and examples apply to both ALR and non-ALR lands.

Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture offers these Tools:

- Regional Growth Strategies
- Official Community Plans*
- Agricultural Area Plans*
- Zoning*
- Subdivision regulation
- Edge Planning Areas
- Development Permit Areas
- Covenants
- Farm Bylaws
- Agri-tourism
- Agricultural Advisory Committees*
- Farmer's markets*

*included in *BC's Farming and Food Future: Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production*

27. Curran, D. *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia*. West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation (2005).

Tool 1: Public Awareness, Education, and Communication

This tool introduces communication and education techniques to increase public awareness about the importance and benefits of agriculture, and encourage people to buy locally and sustainably produced food.

Description

Local government can lead public awareness, education, and communication activities that inspire and empower citizens to make personal changes and advocate for change in their community.

This tool offers ideas for activities that share knowledge and information about agriculture with community members. It describes ways you can engage public interest and participation.

When people buy sustainably-produced food, they help support individual, family, and community health and well-being. They also send a message to food producers that there is a demand and a market for this kind of food.

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- highlight agriculture on the home page of your web site;
- post your Agricultural Area Plan, Food Charter, and related activities (farmers' markets, community events) on your web site;
- deliver workshops to local realtors on zoning and potential conflicts between residential areas and farmland, and how they can be managed;²⁸
- sponsor or support education programs and events that help people learn about where their food comes from;
- report results from monitoring agricultural and food system indicators, such as amount of land farmed and number of residents employed in the sector.²⁹

Resources

*The Sustainability Poll Canada 2006 – Final Report*³⁰ provides a good framework for communications with the public. Although focused on general sustainability, the same concepts can be applied to communications about food production.

Knowledge of Farming

“Only about one-quarter (26%) of British Columbians say they know either “a lot” (5%) or “a fair amount” (22%) about farming in BC. Most British Columbians (74%) report that they either know “not very much” (47%) or “little” (27%) about farming in BC.

Knowledge of farming in BC is much higher among some demographic groups. Groups more likely to say that they know “a lot” or “a fair amount” include residents in households where someone works in the industry (54% “a lot” or “a fair amount”), residents of rural communities (46%), and residents of the Southern Interior (40%) and North (32%) as compared to residents of Vancouver Island (24%) and the Lower Mainland (22%).”

Source: IPSOS Reid Public Affairs. 2008. *Poll of public opinions toward agriculture, food and agri-food production in BC*. Prepared for the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

28. Use the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Agri-Teams to help you develop and deliver workshops.

29. For example, Food Secure Vancouver Study, Vancouver Food Policy Council. info@vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca

30. McAllister Opinion Research. 2006. *The sustainability poll 2006: Quantitative analysis of interviews with 560 Canadian thought leaders and 2,500 members of the public*. James Hoggan and Associates Inc. (info@sustain.we.ca)

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For example:

- People relate more strongly to their day-to-day life than abstract issues. Talk about food production and agriculture in the context of everyday lives and activities of community members (such as shopping, cooking, packing daily lunches, and enjoying the outdoors).
- People respond more passionately when challenges are presented as something that can be solved. For example, you can present a decline in farming as: “Our community is proud of our strong agricultural base. While we have a declining number of farmers, we are confident that with your support, we can develop a Farmers Forever Program and help sustainable food production grow and flourish in our area.”
- People are more motivated to care for and protect something that is perceived as vulnerable or the last of its kind.
- Showcase success stories that show how other local governments are solving challenges with sustainable food production. Describe what you are going to do.
- Demonstrate progress on sustainable food production goals so people can see positive change.
- Link sustainable food production to a friendly and knowledgeable personality who shares practical information and interesting tidbits on how agriculture works.

Other resources include:

Agricultural Awareness Toolkit. Ontario Farm Animal Council (www.ofac.org/agri_resources/AgAwarenessToolkitintro.php)

Agri-Teams. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Contacts.htm)

Poll of public opinions toward agriculture, food, and agri-food production in BC. IPSOS Reid Public Affairs (www.gov.bc.ca/al/attachments/iaf_survey_final_report_dec_17.pdf)

Tool in Action

Township of Spallumcheen web site

From the front page of the Township of Spallumcheen’s web site:

“Set in the beautiful Spallumcheen Valley, the Township of Spallumcheen is a combination of farming, industrial, and residential opportunities. The wide valley bottom is edged with evergreen slopes and boasts all forms of intensive and family agricultural operations. Supported by a vibrant industrial park, experience the oldest and largest municipality in the southern Interior of British Columbia and see why, in Spallumcheen, Farming Comes First.”

(www.spallumcheentwp.bc.ca/)

Information about agriculture

British Columbians get information about agriculture in BC more often from indirect sources (the media) than from primary sources (farmers or friends). When asked to provide up to three sources of information, residents of BC report “newspapers” (41%), the “news” (25%), and television (24%).

Source: IPSOS Reid Public Affairs. 2008. *Poll of public opinions toward agriculture, food and agri-food production in BC*. Prepared for the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.



Figure 7. City of Portland Sustainable Food web page (www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=41480)

City of Surrey Agriculture web page

The City of Surrey has a web page dedicated to agricultural information linked from their front web page under “Doing Business”.

The Agriculture web page provides an overview of agriculture in Surrey, and includes numerous links to related resources and documents.

(www.surrey.ca/Doing+Business/Agriculture+and+Farming/default.htm)

Flavours of Surrey

The City of Surrey, in partnership with the Surrey Farmers Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, hosted a community food tasting event at historical Stewart Farm in 2008, and planned a repeat event for 2009.

The event included an array of food samples made from Surrey-grown and produced ingredients, live entertainment, games, and information about local agriculture.

(www.surrey.ca/Doing+Business/Agriculture+and+Farming/Flavours+of+Surrey+Events/2009+Flavours+of+Surrey/default.htm)



Circle Farm Tours

A Circle Farm Tour is a self-guided tour of a community's farms and farming heritage features. Circle Farm Tours have been developed by the communities of Abbotsford, Agassiz-Harrison Mills, Chilliwack, Langley, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, and Mission.

(www.tourismabbotsford.ca/index.php?page_id=210)

North Okanagan Community Food Portal

The Food Portal is an interactive web site designed to “. . . nurture a community of local food, advocating connections between producers and citizens, and citizens to the local economy and our environment.”

Although this project is community-based, it is an excellent example of the type of communication activities local government can engage in to increase community awareness about sustainable food in your area.

The Food Portal includes food maps, a food directory, Geolive (a mapping application that allows users to add personal markers to the maps with embedded media such as videos or photos), Community Voices (talks from local experts on food), and a Media Gallery.

This project is a partnership between the Center for Social, Spatial, and Economic Justice (CSSEJ) at the University of British Columbia and the Okanagan and Food Action Society of the North Okanagan.

(www.okanaganfood.ca/)

CR-FAIR

Generally, community groups collaborate to develop a food charter. For example, the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Round Table (CR-FAIR), a coalition of organizations and individuals, led the creation of the Capital Regional District Food Charter.

CR-FAIR members include:

- BC Government and Service Employees' Union
- Capital Families Association Food Security Initiative
- Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC)
- Community Council
- Food and Agriculture Sub Committee
- CRD Roundtable on the Environment
- Island Chefs' Collaborative
- LifeCycles Project Society
- Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter
- Small Scale Food Processor Association
- The Land Conservancy of BC
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG)

Tool 2: Food Charter

This tool introduces the development and use of food charters as a method to define, summarize, and formally endorse important community food values.

Description

Food charters present a vision, principles, and priorities for a community's food system. They are developed and endorsed by the community and its decision-makers.

Food charters provide:

- guidelines for community and government decisions that influence the food system (such as policy and program development);
- a policy reference for taking a coordinated, system-wide approach to food issues.

Food charters typically include:

- a preamble;
- values or vision statement;
- principles/ guidelines;
- action goals;
- background and rationale.

The process of developing a food charter brings together diverse community members, and helps create commitment to the vision and to actions for food, health, and environmental outcomes. This process is as valuable as the actual food charter, and its importance should not be underestimated.

Food charters play an important role in establishing a framework for sustainable food production. Use them with:

- Tool 3: Food System Assessments
- Tool 4: Agricultural Area Plans
- Tool 5: Advisory Committees and Task Forces

You can also include them in your Sustainable Community Plan.

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- establish and support a Food Policy Council (see Tool 5, Advisory Committees and Task Forces);
- collaborate with community organizations to initiate a food charter process;
- provide meeting space, office resources, and public announcements, and coordinate public outreach;
- ensure sustainable food production is included in your Food Charter, and that farmers are part of the development process;
- endorse the Food Charter;
- refer to your Food Charter and use it to guide decisions and actions;
- incorporate your Food Charter into your Sustainable Community Plan and Agricultural Area Plan.

Resources

To date, there are no ‘how to’ guides to develop a food charter. Each community will bring its unique situation and needs to the process. A key first step is to identify and engage all the stakeholders that need to be involved.

Groups that want to develop a food charter for their community or region usually start by reviewing food charters and food policies from other jurisdictions, and interviewing participants about the process. They also identify local issues and information related to food production, community health, and the environment.

Tool in Action

Several communities in BC and Canada have completed or are developing a food charter:

- Capital Region Food Charter (www.crd.bc.ca/rte/documents/CRFAIR_Capital_Region_Food_Charter.pdf)
- Gabriola Island Food Charter (proposed) (www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/Food-Charter-Gabriola-2008.pdf)
- Community Food Action Initiative: Project Overview and Kamloops Food Action Plan (www.bitsandbytes.ca/resources/Food_Action_Plan_sept_2006.pdf)
- Kaslo Food Charter (nklcss.org/foodcharter.pdf)

- Manitoba Food Charter
(food.cimnet.ca/cim/43C1_3T7T4T97.dhtm)
- Linking People and Food in Nanaimo
(www.foodlinknanaimo.com/index.php?p=1_10_Food-Charter)
- The Northern Regional Districts Regional Food Charter
(www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/Food-Charter-North-Island.pdf)
- Prince Albert Food Charter
(www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/PrinceAlbertcharter.pdf)
- Saskatoon Food Charter
(www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/SaskatoonFoodCharter.pdf)
- Shuswap Food Charter
(www.shuswapfoodaction.ca/index.php?p=food_charter)
- Toronto Food Charter
(www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf)
- Vancouver Food Charter
(vancouver.ca/COMMSVCS/SOCIALPLANNING/initiatives/foodpolicy/policy/charter.htm)

Northern Regional Districts Regional Food Charter (Vancouver Island)

The Northern Regional Districts Regional Food Charter (Vancouver Island) is an example of a proposed food charter that specifies social, economic, and environmental dependencies, and invites commitment to the development of a coordinated regional food policy.

The Comox Valley and Strathcona Regional Districts are collaborating to present a vision for an integrated, localized food system that benefits all residents within the geographic borders of the Comox Valley Regional District and the Strathcona Regional District.

The Northern Regional Districts Regional Food Charter is intended to champion community engagement and participation in conversations and actions that enhance food security in the North Island geographical region.

(www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/Food-Charter-North-Island.pdf).

Kaslo Food Charter

Kaslo Village Council adopted a resolution on February 12, 2008, stating that the Kaslo Food Charter be adopted in principle (nkless.org/foodcharter.pdf).

It is an example of a food charter that was developed by a community and endorsed by a local government (see page following).

KASLO FOOD CHARTER

In 1976, Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, which includes "the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger."

Food security is defined as: when all people, at all times, have access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just

The Village of Kaslo supports our national commitment to food security, and the following values:

- *Every Kaslo resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally-appropriate food.*
- *Food security contributes to the health and well-being of residents while reducing their need for medical care.*
- *Food is central to Kaslo's economy, and the commitment to food security can strengthen the food sector's growth and development.*
- *Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity and is an important part of the village's culture.*
- *A healthy foodshed in Kaslo relies on an amalgamated North Kootenay Lake food system*

Therefore, to promote food security, Kaslo Village Council may:

1. Champion the importance of food security to federal, provincial and regional government partners.
2. Champion the right of all residents to have access to adequate amounts of safe, and nutritious, food without the need to resort to emergency food providers and advocate for policies that support the secure and dignified access to the food people need
3. Sponsor nutrition programs and services that promote healthy growth in children and help prevent diet-related diseases in later life
4. Partner with local producers, community, cooperative, business and government organizations to increase the availability of healthy local foods
5. Support events that highlight the region's diverse food shed
6. Promote food safety programs and services.

7. Foster a civic culture that inspires all Kaslo residents and all village departments to support local food producers and food programs that provide cultural, social, economic and health benefits by adopting food purchasing practices for Village sponsored events that serve as a model of health, social and environmental responsibility
8. Plant Village decorative gardens with food producing species that are maintained and managed to promote the conservation of wildlife.
9. Encourage the use of our community garden to increase food self-reliance, improve fitness, contribute to a cleaner environment, and enhance community development
10. Advocate for the protection of local producers, agricultural lands and support agriculture through initiatives that highlight the importance of our farmers by working towards an equitable economy that values food producers and the land they grow food on
11. Consider accepting applications for Village owned land to be leased for food production.
12. Support and implement the separation of organic materials from the waste system to be recycled and be made available to nurture soil fertility while reducing compost and foodstuffs garbage that attract bears
13. Foster policies that encourage and assist Village residents to produce their own food in their gardens.
14. Recognize that water is an intricate and essential element to a healthy community and advocate for responsible use
15. Work with community agencies, residents' groups, businesses and other levels of government to achieve these goals.

Definitions in Charter

culturally appropriate food: refers to essential nutrients within specific cultural diets.
I.e: foodstuffs of the native inhabitants of the region;
Ktunaxa & Sinixt

local producers: refers to anyone whom is producing foodstuffs as a way of supporting their household whether financially with commercial foodstuffs or as a homestead and backyard gardeners

Tool 3: Food System Assessment

This tool introduces a method to assess the assets, strengths, and vulnerabilities of your food system and recommend appropriate actions.

Description

A Food System Assessment compiles baseline information on assets related to food production, distribution, access, and consumption. This information helps communities determine their needs and opportunities for a sustainable food system.

The purpose of a Food System Assessments will vary depending on community interest and need. For example, a Food System Assessment can:³¹

- provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of your food system;
- provide a framework for understanding how different components of your food system act together to contribute your community's health and well-being;
- provide information for decision-making and program and policy formation;
- increase community awareness of and participation in food-related projects;
- help articulate a vision of how your community wants its food system to function;
- help set priorities and goals to improve your local food system;
- identify potential partners, community resources, and opportunities;
- build new and stronger networks, partnerships, and coalitions;
- provide data that can be used in future proposals and reports;
- establish a long-term monitoring system with a clear and valid set of indicators;
- generate information for funders, including community food security funders, who are increasingly requiring evidence-based research to substantiate proposal requests.

31. Miewald, C., Barbolet, H., Cuddeford, V., Kurbis, S., de la Salle, J., & Whiting, D. 2007. *Community Food System Assessment Guide for British Columbia*. Simon Fraser University. Retrieved August 8, 2009 from www.sfu.ca/cscd/research/food_security/

Food System Assessments play an important role as you establish a framework for sustainable food production. Use them with:

- Tool 2: Food Charters;
- Tool 4: Agriculture Area Plans;
- Tool 5: Advisory Committees and Task Forces.

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- initiate a Food System Assessment in partnership with community groups (producers, distributors, consumers, academic and applied researchers, students, service providers);
- include sustainable food production in your Food System Assessment;
- use a food charter to guide the focus of your Food System Assessment (see Tool 2: Food Charters);
- integrate your Food System Assessment process and information to your Sustainable Community Plan.

Resources

Community Food System Assessment Guide for British Columbia.
Simon Fraser University (www.sfu.ca/cscd/research/food_security/)

Community Food Assessment Guide. BC Provincial Health Services Authority
(www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/76D687CF-6596-46FE-AA9A-A536D61FB038/28451/PHSAreportCFAIcommunityfoodassessmentguide.pdf)

Funding

Funding for a Food System Assessment can come from diverse sources because it involves such diverse community concerns as health, the environment, income, and farming.

For example, the Vancouver Food System Assessment was supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada in partnership with the City of Vancouver's Social Planning Department, Simon Fraser University's Centre for Sustainable Community Development, and the Environmental Youth Alliance.

Tool in Action

Vancouver Coastal Health – Community Food Action Initiative reports

All along BC's southern coast, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority works in partnership with communities to address food system and food security issues. Eight communities have formed Community Food Action Initiative Committees. To date, these committees have each completed an environmental scan, food system assessment, gap analysis, and three-year action plans.

Final reports are available for Richmond, Vancouver, North Shore, Sea-to-Sky, Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Bella Bella, and Bella Coola. Reports and other resources can be found at www.vch.ca/population/food.htm.

Capital Region – Baseline Assessment of Food Security

In 2004 the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Round Table (CR-FAIR) carried out an assessment of their food system. The final report, *Baseline Assessment of Food Security in BC's Capital Region*, includes baseline information on community food production resources, the food distribution network, and individual/household food security.

Funding was provided by CR-FAIR, the Community Council, and Thrifty Foods. This baseline assessment is part of CR-FAIR's mission to "increase knowledge of and bring about positive change in the food and agriculture system within the Capital Region."

(www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/CR-FAIR_FS_Assessment_2004.pdf)

Tool 4: Agricultural Area Plan

This tool introduces a process for developing plans that help guide agricultural decision-making in farming areas that are entirely or partially within municipalities and/ or regional districts.

This tool is part of *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia*, by Deborah Curran, West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation (2005).

For more information about Agricultural Area Plans and additional resources and examples, see *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture* (www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf).

Description

Agricultural Area Plans are local government plans that establish a vision, policies, and actions for supporting and promoting agriculture.

They can apply generally to an entire local government as policy, or can be incorporated into bylaws, such as an Official Community Plan (OCP).

The *Local Government Act* gives municipalities and regional districts the authority to develop OCPs for all or part of their jurisdiction. When plans encompass only part of the land area of a local government and are incorporated into an OCP, they are often called Local Area Plans. Local Area Plans that focus on specific farming areas can be referred to as Agricultural Area Plans (AAPs).

AAPs can also apply to an entire municipality or regional district. Such AAPs may not have the status of a Local Area Plan (adopted by bylaw into the OCP), but can provide important policy for guiding local government decision-making.

AAP planning processes provide an opportunity for the community to learn about agriculture in their area and participate in setting a vision for sustainable food production (see Tool in Action, Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan).

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- complete an Agricultural Area Plan;
- designate specific staff to implement and maintain your Agricultural Area Plan.

Keeping your Agricultural Area Plan updated and integrated with your community planning processes will help ensure its success.

Community Farms Program

Resources

Planning for Agriculture. Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/Planning_for_Agriculture/index.htm)

Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia
West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation
(www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf)

Strengthening Farming – Agricultural Area Plans. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/aap/index.htm)

Strengthening Farming – Completed Agricultural Area Plans, Strategies and Studies. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/aap/strategies.htm)

Strengthening Farming – GIS and Land Use Inventory. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm#GIS)

Strengthening Farming – Planning for Agriculture (Chapter 7). Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm#plan_ag)

Funding

Local Government Agricultural Planning Program. Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC
(www.iafbc.ca/funding_available/programs/local-govt-ag-planning/ag_planning.htm)

Support

Agri-Team. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/localgov/support.htm#agri-teams)

Tool in Action

Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan

Salt Spring Island's *Area Farm Plan* was developed with community input and involvement. It is not a Local Area Plan in that it does not have the status of a bylaw. Rather, it is a policy document that provides direction to decision-making.

Our Vision

That Salt Spring Island become a place where agriculture is a strong, vital, and productive part of the local economy, and is carried out in a manner that protects and promotes a sustainable community.

Our Mission

To return agriculture to a place of prominence on Salt Spring Island as a healthy, viable and culturally supportive endeavour.

In 2005, the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Advisory Committee recommended development of an Area Farm Plan (AFP). In 2006, the Salt Spring Island Farmers Institute and the Island Natural Growers, in collaboration with the Local Trust Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, initiated the planning process.

Key funding came from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Investment Agriculture Foundation. Additional funding and support were provided by the Salt Spring Island Farmers Institute, Island Natural Growers, Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and the Capital Regional District.

The AFP development process:

- analyzed background information (land use data, farm statistics);
- identified issues and opportunities;
- established a guiding vision;
- developed strategies and recommendations;
- provided recommendations to the OCP review process;
- established an implementation plan;
- conducted a public review.

The Salt Spring Island community played a key role in developing an AFP that belongs to them.

Community input was invited through:

- three Community Dialogues to discuss issues, opportunities, and the vision;
- two farmer reviews of the draft plan;
- public comment forms.

For more information, see the Plan to Farm web page at

www.ssifi.org/farmplan/Default.htm.

The Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan can be found at

www.bitsandbytes.ca/resources/SSI_FarmPlan_Booklet_Jan08.pdf.

Electoral Area C (Rural Oliver, Town of Oliver) – Agricultural Area Plan

In 2008, Oliver published the *Agricultural Area Plan – Area C (AAP)* that will direct their local Official Community Plan, zoning bylaw changes, and the Rural Area portion of their Agricultural Resort Area Concept.

The AAP is described as an ‘evolutionary plan’ that will facilitate regular updates and publication of related data and results. The AAP was developed by an Agricultural Steering Plan Committee, composed of diverse stakeholders from government and industry.

The AAP focuses on eight key areas:

- Agricultural Land Use
- Agricultural Water Supply, Quality and Access
- Pursuing Economic Prosperity
- Agro-Environmental Interface
- Rural-Urban Interface
- Corridors and Rights-of-Way
- Enhancing the Profile of Agriculture
- Regulation

Public input was invited throughout the process of developing the plan.

Funding was provided in part by the Investment Agriculture Foundation.

For more information and to review the *Agricultural Area Plan – Electoral Area C*, see www.rdos.bc.ca/index.php?id=608.

Tool 5: Advisory Committees and Task Forces

This tool introduces a framework to provide advice and recommendations about food and agricultural issues to local government staff and elected officials, and facilitate communication between government and local communities.

Description

Advisory committees such as Agricultural Advisory Committees (or Commissions) and Food Policy Councils are an effective way for local governments to keep informed about the food system. Task forces can help address specific food issues over a defined period of time (for example, a Food Security Task Force).

Agricultural Advisory Committees

Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) maintain communication between the agricultural community and local government, and ensure that farming issues are considered in all local government decision-making. AACs can be formed by municipal and regional governments. A regional AAC generally includes representatives from municipal AACs in the area.

Committee members can include representatives from animal, plant, and specialty commodity groups, local government (e.g. Regional Board), Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Agricultural Land Commission, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Water Commission, and others as appropriate.

As of July 2009, there were 38 AACs supporting local governments in BC, representing rural and urban communities of all sizes.³²

Food Policy Councils

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) create communication bridges between communities and local government on food-related topics.

Food Policy Councils can:

- bring together individuals, agencies, and organizations that do not typically work directly with each other or are not normally involved with food production and food policy;
- examine overlooked issues such as the effectiveness of food assistance programs;
- recognize and focus on links between different parts of the food system (e.g. food production and health);

32. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. n.d. Agricultural Advisory Committees in British Columbia. Retrieved August 16, 2009 from: www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/aac/list.htm.

Community Farms Program

- consider how government decisions affect all levels of the food system (land, farmers, food buyers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers).

FPCs can be formed at both the municipal and regional levels. FPC members are diverse and can include: farmers, consumers, anti-hunger advocates, food bank managers, labour representatives, food processors, food wholesalers and distributors, food retailers and grocers, chefs and restaurant owners, farm organizations, community gardeners, and academics involved in food policy and the law.

Task force

A task force is a temporary group formed to address a specific issue or project. They can address a wide variety of topics, including food, ranching, health, and energy. Task force membership depends on the focus of the group.

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- officially adopt an existing Food Policy Council;
- establish a Food Policy Council;
- establish an Agriculture Advisory Committee;
- establish a focused task force (e.g. food production, food security, food access).

Resources

Agricultural Advisory Committee Information Package. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/aac/package.htm)

Food Policy. City of Vancouver, Community Services, Social Planning
(vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/policy/index.htm)

North American Food Policy Council
(www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/index.html)

Tool in Action

District of Lake Country Agricultural Advisory Committee

Purpose and mandate from Terms of Reference, District of Lake Country Agricultural Advisory Committee:

1. Purpose:

The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) is formed to advise the Council of the District of Lake Country (DLC) on agricultural issues.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee is an advisory committee established and appointed by Council under Section 142 of the Community Charter (select committee).

2. Mandate:

- (i) The Agricultural Advisory Committee is established to:
 - (a) review and provide recommendations on Land Commission applications which are to be considered by Council;
 - (b) at the request of Council or the Director of Development Services, review and provide recommendations to staff and Council on land use applications and matters effecting agriculture and the agri-business community;
 - (c) at the request of Council or the Director of Development Services, review planning documents such as the Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw, Sector and Neighbourhood Plans and make recommendations to Council with respect to impacts on agriculture and agri-business;
 - (d) provide recommendations to Council on ways to preserve and protect agriculture within the District of Lake Country.
- (ii) The Committee shall consider the following when reviewing applications or agricultural related issues:
 - (a) the effect of the proposal on the agricultural potential of the subject property;
 - (b) the effect of the proposal on adjoining ALR properties and surrounding agricultural operations;
 - (c) possible acceptable alternatives to the proposal, where deemed appropriate;
 - (d) the identification of issues relating to the protection of ALR lands specific to the application.

www.lakecountry.bc.ca/files/%7B173B83BD-047C-4310-B3B0-F098548ACE3A%7DAg%20Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf

Vancouver Food Policy Council

The Vancouver Food Policy Council's (VFPC) vision is to support the development of a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver that fosters sustainable, equitable food production, distribution, and consumption; nutrition; community development; and environmental health.

The main goal of the Council is to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas and policy recommendations for how it can be improved.

Community Farms Program

To date, the VFPC has helped shaped policy and made recommendations on the following City of Vancouver projects:

- Vancouver Food Charter
- 2010 Community Gardening initiative
- Hobby Beekeepers (Urban Apiculture) Guidelines
- Long-term planning for farmers' markets

In 2008, the VFPC initiated a study to develop a program to identify, review, and analyze key factors required to support and enhance Vancouver's food security.

In 2009, the VFPC received an international award from the International Network of Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security for their work on food.

Other Food Policy Councils in Canada include:

- Kamloops Food Policy Council (foodsecurecanada.org/en/node/595)
- Calgary Food Policy Council (calgaryfoodpolicy.blogspot.com/)
- Toronto Food Policy Council (www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm)

BC's Ranching Task Force

In the spring of 2009, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands formed the Ranching Task Force to “. . . identify key issues and opportunities facing the ranching and beef industry in British Columbia, and to make recommendations to ensure a strong, vibrant, and sustainable industry in British Columbia for this generation, and future generations.”

Members include ranchers, BC Cattlemen's Association, BC Agriculture Council, BC Association of Cattle Feeders, BC Breeders and Feeders Association, BC Food Processors Association, MLA, Independent Rural Representative, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and Ministry of Forests and Range.

For more information, see www.ranchingtaskforce.gov.bc.ca/.

Tool 6: Official Community Plan

This tool introduces a process for including information and policies about agricultural lands in your Official Community Plan.

It is part of *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia*, by Deborah Curran, West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation (2005).

For more information about Official Community Plans and additional resources and examples, see *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture* (www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf).

Description

Official Community Plans (OCPs) establish the vision and policies that guide community development. They guide local government decisions, as all new bylaws must be consistent with the OCP (interpreted by courts to mean “not in direct conflict” with it). Typically, OCPs are reviewed every 5-10 years by Council, local government staff, the public, and key stakeholders.

According to the *Local Government Act*, OCPs must include “statements and map designations for the approximate location, amount, and type of present and proposed agricultural land uses”. OCPs may include policy statements “respecting the maintenance and enhancement of farming on land in a farming area or in an area designated for agricultural use in the community plan”.

Strong pro-agriculture OCP policies can direct staff and elected officials to consider the impact of proposed development on farming, and to support farming in other ways.

Policy documents that work in partnership with OCPs include:

- Local Area Plans;
- Development Permit Area guidelines;
- Regional Growth Strategies.

Activities

See *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture* for examples of OCP statements that support agriculture.

As a local government, you can:

- include statements that support agriculture in your Official Community Plan;
- restrict additional instalment of sewer, water, road, and other facilities in agricultural areas to avoid encouraging non-farm development;

Community Farms Program

- support local agriculture to provide a level of food sufficiency for the municipality/ electoral district/ regional district;
- direct purchasing to sustainable and local food and other agriculture products.

Resources

ALR and Community Planning Guidelines. Agricultural Land Commission (www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Publications/publications.htm)

Local Government Act Part 26 Division 2 – Official Community Plans (www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/96323_00)

Planning for Agriculture. Agricultural Land Commission (www.alc.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/Planning_for_Agriculture/index.htm)

Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia. West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation (www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf)

Smart Bylaws Guide – Working Lands – Official Community Plan Policies. West Coast Environmental Law (www.wcel.org/issues/urban/sbg/part2/workinglands/OCP/)

Green Bylaws Toolkit. Wetland Stewardship Partnership, Chapter 5 (www.greenbylaws.ca)

The District of Central Saanich Official Community Plan: Appendix 1 to OCP bylaw no. 1600 (www.centralsaanich.ca/hall/forms.htm)

Tool in Action

Central Saanich – Strengthening agriculture through the OCP review process

In 2008, the Corporation of the District of Central Saanich formed an Ad Hoc Farm Land Economic Viability Review Committee to inform their Official Community Plan (OCP) review. Central Saanich wanted its OCP to define how it would maintain a supportive, encouraging environment for agriculture.

The Committee consisted of local Councillors, planners, farmers, and representatives from provincial government and non-profit organizations.

The Committee presented seven conclusions, a toolkit of actions that the District could take to support agriculture, and several proposed policy changes for the updated OCP.

Corporation of the District of Central Saanich Official Community Plan (2008), selected agricultural objectives and policies:

3.2.1. Preserving Agricultural Land

Objective: To preserve lands with potential for agricultural production and to protect these areas from incompatible land uses

Policy 1: Areas designated as Agriculture on Schedule A, Land Use Plan will be retained for agricultural uses over the long-term regardless of any changes that may be made by the Provincial Government with respect to the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

Policy 7: Land abutting ALR land is to include a buffer strip. Any new development on lands adjacent to ALR lands may be required to provide berms, landscaped buffer areas, and/ or fencing next to the property line between the farm and the non-agricultural use. The Land Use Bylaw specifies setback requirements for residential development adjacent to lands in the ALR.

Policy 8: New institutional buildings and uses such as schools, hospitals, residential care facilities, cultural facilities, fire or police services shall not be located within the Agricultural area.

Policy 9: New roads, utility corridors, or other public uses shall not be located on agricultural lands unless no suitable alternative exists. In those cases where no suitable alternative exists, land excluded from the ALR must be replaced with land of equal or greater agricultural value within the District of Central Saanich.

Policy 10: The presence of institutional or recreational uses within the agricultural area shall not be considered as the basis for restriction or limitation of any farming activity.

Policy 11: Amend the Land Use Bylaw to incorporate provincial standards that guide maximum lot coverage for non-agricultural buildings and structures associated with land uses in agricultural zones.

Policy 12: Amend the Land Use Bylaw to limit the maximum size of residences in agricultural areas.

3.2.2. Support for Agriculture

Objective: To ensure the sustainability and economic viability of the District of Central Saanich's farm community as an integral part of agriculture on the Saanich Peninsula

Policy 3: Support and encourage agricultural activities by developing an Agricultural Area Plan for Central Saanich. This plan may, among other things, define legitimate farming, address factors that are increasing the cost of farmland, determine how to encourage farming and value-added food production, and address

the environmental management of farms.

Policy 5: Support in principle the diversification of the agricultural economy in Central Saanich, through such activities as farm-gate marketing and other agri-tourism opportunities that are ancillary to primary farming activities and do not impact the agricultural capability of farmland.

Policy 10: Develop an agricultural-industrial zoning designation to protect and encourage agriculture-related industries in the Keating Industrial area and at other appropriate locations throughout the District (cross-reference Section 5: Economic Development).

Policy 11: Allow and support the development of regular farmers' markets including small pocket markets in existing parking lots and public spaces.

Policy 12: In discussion with the appropriate Provincial authorities, develop criteria to guide the establishment and location of supportive, seasonal (temporary) farm worker housing. Also explore the need and opportunity for establishing long-term, on-farm housing.

Policy 14: Explore and encourage alternative models of agricultural land ownership that support farming, such as community farmland trusts.

Policy 15: Support efforts to acquire and protect agricultural land within the community in order to increase local sustainable food production and create opportunities for new farmers.

3.2.3. Environmental Stewardship

Objective: To encourage and support the implementation of environmentally considerate farm practices

Policy 2: Support the Canada – British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan program as it relates to agricultural and farming practices.

Policy 3: Encourage the implementation of environmental and sustainable farm practices that provide local producers with an economic advantage while improving the health of the local community.

Policy 5: Work with the agricultural community to support water conservation measures on farms.

Policy 6: Support the beneficial application of recycled organic matter and compost on farm lands to reduce the District's contribution to the waste stream and improve the health and fertility of local soils.

Tool 7: Food Procurement Policy

This tool introduces a technique for local government to define what kind of food its institutions will purchase, and how.

Description

Institutional food purchasing preferences and procedures affect your community's economic well-being. As a local government, you can tailor your food procurement policies to meet your area's specific needs, strengths, and concerns.

For example, you can design a policy that requires a certain amount of food is purchased from farmers using sustainable food production practices (see Tool in Action – Town of Markham and Local Food Plus), or that meets fair labour standards.

Your food procurement policy can provide multiple benefits for sustainable food production and the community:

- Provide markets for farmers
- Support your local economy and create jobs
- Generate community awareness of healthy food alternatives
- Support urban connections to surrounding rural communities
- Encourage food production practices that protect and enhance the environment

There are concerns that local food procurement policies are hindered by the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and the Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA).

According to a legal review by Steven Shrybman of Sack Goldblatt Mitchell LLP (March 4, 2009), “. . . there is simply no plausible basis for impugning the validity of a local food procurement policy under either international or domestic trade rules. In the exceedingly unlikely even that such a policy was challenged under AIT/ TILMA rules, that complaint would surely fail.”

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- develop food procurement policies to purchase certified sustainable food (see sidebar, Local Food Plus);
- specify exemptions for food where purchase price may influence availability to people with low income.

Resources

A guide to developing a sustainable food purchasing policy. British Columbia Working Group and Network on Sustainability Education. (www.walkingthetalk.bc.ca/node/1180)

Bringing Local Food Home: Legal, regulatory and institutional barriers to local food. Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation Occasional Paper Series 7 (www.cielap.org/pub/pub_foodlegalbarriers.php)

British Columbia – Municipal Food Procurement Policies. Letter from Sack Goldblatt Mitchell LLP to Mr. Darryl Walker, President, BC Government and Service Employees' Union (www.bitsandbytes.ca/resources/British_Columbia_-_Municipal_Food_Procurement_Policies.pdf)

Food connects us all: Sustainable local food in Southern Ontario. Metcalf Foundation (www.ourgreenbelt.ca/sites/ourgreenbelt.ca/files/Food%20Connects%20Us%20All.pdf)

Local food procurement policies: A literature review. Nova Scotia Department of Energy.

Sustainable food policy (www.sustainablefoodpolicy.org/)

Sustainable purchasing guide. Greater Vancouver Regional District (www.fivewinds.com/uploadedfiles_shared/SustainablePurchasingGuide.pdf)

Tool in Action

City of Toronto – Local food policy

In October 2008, the City of Toronto adopted a local food procurement policy. The policy grew out of the *Climate Change, Clean Air, and Sustainable Energy Action Plan* previously adopted by city council in 2007.

The goal of this plan is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By choosing to source locally-grown food, the City of Toronto plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with food transportation.³³

33. Note: A 2008 study by Christopher Weber and H. Scott Matthews demonstrates that greenhouse gas emissions associated with food are dominated by the production phase, rather than transportation. In the United States, production contributed to 83% of the average US household's 8.1 t CO₂e/yr footprint for food consumption, while transportation only represented 11%. Weber, C. & Matthews, H.S. 2008. Food miles and the relative climate impacts of food choices in the United States. *Environ. Sci. Tech.* 42(10), 3508 – 3513.

Local is defined as food that is grown in the Greater Toronto Area, the Greenbelt of Ontario, and other regions of Ontario.³⁴

The local food procurement policy will initially be implemented under the Children's Services Division (2009) in childcare centres. This project will be evaluated by the Government Management Committee, including possible financial implications to other city divisions adopting a local food procurement policy.

The goal is to have local food comprise 50% of food purchases by municipal departments, provided the initial pilot project and other implementation studies go well.

For more information, see the *City of Toronto Local Food Procurement Policy and Implementation Plan*.

(www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/gm/bgrd/backgroundfile-16137.pdf)

Town of Markham and Local Food Plus

In 2008, Markham became the first municipality in Canada to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Local Food Plus (LFP). LFP is a non-profit organization that certifies farmers and processors that provide environmentally and socially responsible food, and links them with local purchasers (see sidebar, Local Food Plus).³⁵

Markham adopted LFP procurement practices to help support Ontario's farm economy, address climate change, reduce greenhouse gases and pesticide use, and promote environmentally responsible purchasing.³⁶

Working with LFP, Markham will ensure that LFP-certified Ontario farmers supply a minimum of 10% of its cafeteria material and produce, with the goal of increasing that amount by 5% each year. Costs are born by their cafeteria contractor (local food can cost an additional 5-20%).³⁷

For more information, contact the Town of Markham and Local Food Plus (www.localfoodplus.ca).

34. Personal Communication. Mark Bekkering, Manager Implementation and Support, Toronto Environment Office, City of Toronto. April 20, 2009.

35. Local Food Plus. www.localfoodplus.ca/index.htm

36. www.markham.ca/Markham/Departments/NewsCentre/News/080604_lfp.htm

37. Personal communication. Alex Moore, Town of Markham. 2009.

Local Food Plus

Local Food Plus (LFP) is a non-profit organization that certifies farmers and processors, and links them with local purchasers. Their goal is to foster sustainable food systems through certification. LFP certification covers every step of the food production and distribution process.

LFP certification provides benefits to multiple stakeholders in the food system. LFP certified farmers and processors:

1. Employ sustainable production systems that:
 - reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers;
 - avoid the use of hormones, antibiotics, and genetic engineering;
 - conserve soil and water;
2. Provide safe and fair working conditions for on-farm labour;
3. Provide healthy and humane care for livestock;
4. Protect and enhance wildlife habitat and biodiversity on working farm landscapes;
5. Reduce food-related energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions through:
 - energy conservation;
 - recycling;
 - minimal packaging;
 - local sales.

Table 5. Benefits of Local Food Plus

Stakeholder	Benefits
Farmer	Potential predictable income stream and opportunity to be recognized for good land stewardship practices
Institution	Opportunity to play a leading role in investing in the long-term economic and environmental health of communities by committing to the purchase of LFP products
Consumer	Satisfaction from supporting the local economy and the health of the land, and eating socially and environmentally responsible food

Tool 8: Zoning

This tool introduces a framework for local governments to regulate and support agricultural land use.

This tool is part of *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia*, by Deborah Curran, West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation (2005).

For more information about zoning and additional resources and examples, see *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture* (www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf).

Support alternative farm models

Alternative farm models may require unique zoning to support their establishment and success. Community farms are an example of alternative farm models.

On community farms, community members and multiple farmers collaborate in sustainable, local food production. For more information, see the Community Farms Program.

(www.ffcf.bc.ca/programs/farm/community_farms.html)

Support agriculture-related activities

Beyond farmland, farming includes the commercial infrastructure that supports the agricultural industry (such as access to storage, suppliers, and locations for sales). Zoning can be used to identify and designate land in appropriate areas (e.g. less fertile land and in buffer zones between active agricultural land and urban areas) for the activities that support agriculture.

Description

The *Local Government Act, Part 26, Division 7* outlines the powers of local governments to use zoning to regulate land use. Local governments can also use zoning to regulate buildings and other structures, the siting, size and dimensions of buildings, and the location of uses on the land.

While local governments cannot allow non-farm uses on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land, local zoning can help ensure that even if the land is removed from the ALR, non-farm uses are still restricted.

When farmland is not in the ALR, local government zoning plays an even more important role in keeping land for farming. *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture* provides excellent information on this topic.

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- zone to support alternative farm models (see sidebar, Support alternative farm models);
- zone for housing;
- restrict farm home plate (see sidebar, Restrict farm home plate);
- zone to support agriculture-related activities (see sidebar, Support agriculture-related activities);
- rezone in exchange for voluntary amenity contributions (see Tool 9: Amenity Density Bonus Provision).

Some farming models (e.g. Community Farms) require more than one farm residence on the land. Under the Agricultural Land Commission Policy #9, *Additional Residences for Farm Use*, additional residences may be allowed on ALR land if they are for farm use only. Zoning can be designed for farm use to allow additional residences or suites on both ALR land and non-ALR land.

Community Farms Program

A legitimate concern exists that adding residences on farmland could stimulate future subdivision of agricultural lands. Placing a covenant on the land is one way to prevent subdivision. The covenant can be held by a land trust and/ or by a local government.

Another concern is that farm housing units will be rented to those who are not actively farming the land. Enforcement of zoning bylaws or, in some cases, placing a covenant on the land title can restrict the use of on-farm housing.³⁸

Finally, to address a concern that additional housing will encroach on productive land, zoning for additional farm accommodation can limit the footprint of the housing by requiring attached housing forms or clustering, which are also more energy efficient.

Resources

Local Government Act Part 26 Division 7 – Zoning and Other Development Regulation
(www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/96323_00)

Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia.
West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation
(www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf)

Tool in Action

Haliburton Community Organic Farm – Zoning for alternative farm models

In 2006, the Capital Regional District transferred a piece of land zoned Utility (P-2) to the District of Saanich for the purpose of local sustainable agriculture. The District of Saanich rezoned the piece of land as Rural Zone (Demonstration Farm)(A-1DF).

This land is now leased to the Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society, and is home to the Haliburton Community Organic Farm. The Society rents land to three farm businesses. For zoning details, see the *District of Saanich Zoning Bylaw 8200* (www.saanich.ca/municipal/clerks/bylaws/zone8200.html).

38. For example, the Whistler Housing Authority uses covenants to limit occupancy and use of housing to employees or retirees of Whistler (www.whistlerhousing.ca/). This approach can be taken if rental is a use of land or a building as contemplated by section 219(2)(a) of the *Land Title Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996 c.250.

Restrict farm home plate

"Country-estate" style houses in rural areas create concerns that these buildings will reduce the ability of the land to be used for agriculture in the future due to their large footprint and the accessory residential uses that accompany them. There is also concern about increased conflict between country estates and neighbouring active farming operations.

Zoning and supportive agricultural development permit areas can be used to contain residential and associated structures and impermeable surfaces within a limited area, located on the least farmable and ecologically-important parts of the land.

Pitt Meadows – Home plate restrictions

Local governments, especially those in the Lower Mainland, are exploring farm home plate restrictions. Recent examples include Delta, Abbotsford, Surrey, Squamish-Lillooet, and Pitt Meadows.

With over 80% of Pitt Meadow's land base in the Agricultural Land Reserve, they are concerned about the future of their farmland. As a part of their process in examining home plate restrictions, the City of Pitt Meadows produced a discussion paper in 2008 that provides an overview of farm home plate restrictions and related options for implementation.

(www.pittmeadows.bc.ca/assets/Planning~Development/pdfs/agricultural%20discussion%20paper.pdf)

Tool 9: Amenity Density Bonus Provision

This tool introduces a process to develop agricultural benefits using amenity contributions from non-agricultural developments.

Description

Section 904 Zoning for amenities and affordable housing of the *Local Government Act* allows local governments to rezone land for higher than specified levels of density provided that certain amenity contributions are provided by the landowner. These amenity contributions can be designed to help a community achieve social, economic, and environmental benefits related to agriculture.

Local governments can define the amenities required as the term ‘amenity’ is not defined in legislation. According to *Density Bonus Provisions: A guide and model bylaw from the Office of Housing and Construction Standards*, an amenity is “. . . generally understood to be something that enhances the desirability of a property such as a view, access to the water, underground parking, child care space, open space, or an environmentally sensitive area”.

The guidelines recognize that, in some situations, it may be impractical to provide an on-site amenity and there may be value in pooling amenities from several development projects. Cash in-lieu of direct provision of a physical amenity may be appropriate.

Effective amenity density bonus programs define the maximum density available, and also prioritize desired amenities that are identified by community needs. The *Local Government Act* allows for the number, kind, and extent of the amenity to be described.

Amenities for bonus density are generally set out in the Official Community Plan.

Local governments can also consider voluntary offers of amenities in return for rezoning to increase density.

BC’s Office of Housing and Construction provides a set of guidelines to help local governments develop appropriate amenity provisions (see Resources).

Activities

As a local government, you have several options when crafting density bonus provisions for sustainable food production.

Density bonus provisions can provide:

- permanent farmers’ market facilities in designated areas (see Tool 13: Infrastructure);
- income to purchase farmland for food production;

- land to a land trust or other institution for community farming, community food processing, community greenhouses, and/ or community food storage (see Tools in Action – Salt Spring Island).

You can look beyond these suggestions for other uses of density bonus that best support your community's food system and health goals. For example, density bonus provisions may be used to support urban agriculture initiatives, such as community gardens.

Resources

Density Bonusing. BC Climate Action Toolkit
(www.toolkit.bc.ca/tool/density-bonusing)

Local Government Act Section 904
(www.civicinfo.bc.ca/LocalGovernmentAct/)

Obtaining amenity contributions from new urban development projects. City of Victoria
(www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/plnpln_downtown_amnty_ctrbt.pdf)

Green Bylaws Toolkit. Wetlands Stewardship Partnership, Chapter 6 Zoning (www.greenbylaws.ca)

Tool in Action

Salt Spring Island – Land for community agriculture

Appendix 3 (H.3.2) of the *Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 434, 2008* (approved October 2008) provides a detailed list of eligible community amenities that would be considered in exchange for amenity zoning applications.

Item H.3.2.1(e) is a specific request related to agricultural support: “land for community-owned farmland or land for community agricultural processing or storage facilities provided to the Salt Spring Farmers’ Institute or a community farmland trust organization.”

Tool 10: Local Conservation Fund

This tool introduces a method to fund acquisition and conservation of sustainable farms and the environmental benefits they provide.

Description

Sustainable food production practices provide environmental benefits for communities as a whole (e.g. wildlife, water filtration, carbon sequestration). One way to support farm practices that are environmentally beneficial is to establish a Local Conservation Fund.

To acquire money for a Local Conservation Fund, establish a local service and levy a parcel tax on each property within your jurisdiction.

This type of fund has been used by local governments throughout Canada and the United States to conserve watersheds, wildlife habitat, and open space, and support recreation and local food production.³⁹

Organizations that share related goals can partner to set up a Local Conservation Fund.

Activities

As a local government, you can establish a Conservation Fund to:

- provide matching grants for region-based projects that meet the goals of the fund;
- purchase land for joint food production and conservation purposes;
- purchase covenants on agricultural land.⁴⁰

Covenants can be used to protect natural features and prevent subdivision or use of the land for purposes other than agriculture. In BC, section 219 of the *Land Title Act* allows affirmative covenants (positive language) that could be used to require that land be kept in production. However, the law is unsettled on the enforcement of positive covenants.

Use Local Conservation Funds to help move your community toward your sustainability goals. For example, the Regional District of East Kootenay polled residents and selected three top priorities (water, wildlife habitat, and preservation of open spaces). See Tool in Action – Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund.

Canadians value the environment

The *2006 Sustainability Poll* (James Hoggan and Associates, Inc.) showed that eight in ten Canadians believe "... that protecting and cleaning up the environment contributes to the growth of the economy.

Another 70% reject the view that environmental protection increases unemployment.

Moreover, many of those who are worried about economic survival nonetheless express concern about environmental quality in the long-term, linking it to health issues and quality of life."

39. East Kootenay Conservation Program. 2008. *Local Conservation Fund – Questions and Answers*. The three local government conservation funds in BC are in the Capital Regional District (2000), Cowichan Valley Regional District (2008), and Regional District of East Kootenay (2008).

40. Placing covenants on ALR land is challenging as the Agricultural Land Commission views covenants as restricting agriculture in the future. Non-ALR land does not have the same barrier.

Resources

Community Charter Division 4 (Parcel Taxes)

(www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20C%20--/Community%20Charter%20%20SBC%202003%20%20c.%2026/00_Act/03026_00.htm)

Local Government Act Divisions 4, Services and Powers and 4.1, Establishing Bylaws

(www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20L%20--/Local%20Government%20Act%20%20RSBC%201996%20%20c.%20323/00_Act/96323_00.htm)

Parcel Tax. Local Government Department. Ministry of Community Development (www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/finance/parcel_tax.htm)

Regional District Conservation Funds in British Columbia: Three Case Studies. Micah Carmody. 2009. Victoria Environmental Law Centre

(www.elc.uvic.ca/publications/projects/RD-Conservation-Fund-Case-Studies.pdf)

Tool in Action

Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund

The recently established Columbia Valley Local Conservation Fund (the Fund) is a result of a partnership between the Regional District of East Kootenay and the East Kootenay Conservation Program.⁴¹

The Fund will be used to leverage additional funding, and applied to conservation purposes in the region. Proposed projects must contribute to the goals of the partnership, and fit into one of the three priority areas that were identified in a regional poll (conserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat, watersheds, and open space/ farmland/ forest land).

In November 2008, Columbia Valley residents voted in favour of the Fund within Electoral Areas F and G, the District of Invermere, Village of Radium Hot Springs, and Village of Canal Flats. The Regional District enacted *Service Bylaw No. 2083* regarding the Fund in December 2008.

The Fund is established to annually requisition up to a maximum of \$230,000 or the product of \$0.055 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value of land and improvements, whichever is greater, to be collected by an annual parcel tax (about \$20 per parcel). This parcel tax will be collected for nine years, and is expected to generate about \$2 million for the Fund.

41. The East Kootenay Conservation Program is a partnership of over forty conservation, industry, and government organizations.

Community Farms Program

The Bylaw provides a legal framework for the Fund, and specifically establishes the service for conservation projects (meaning the fund cannot be used for any other purposes).

For more information, see www.ekcp.ca/EKCP_LCF.html.

Capital Regional District Land Acquisition Fund

Although the Capital Regional District Land Acquisition Fund does not support agriculture, it is a good example of using a Local Conservation Fund for land acquisition.

With public support confirmed by some municipalities through referenda, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board established the CRD Parks Land Acquisition Fund in 2000. The 10 year fund is used to purchase land for regional parks and trails as identified in the CRD Parks Master Plan. The Land Acquisition Strategy sets the financial contribution target of 65% for Regional Parks and 35% for its partners.⁴²

As of 2007, the CRD purchased 2,821 hectares of regionally-significant green space for \$23,472,264. Regional Parks have contributed 71% or \$16,749,214, and partners have contributed 29% or \$6,723,050.⁴³

The cost of the fund is about \$10 per residential household (\$1.91 per \$100,000 assessed residential property value in 2007). The total revenue generated per year is approximately \$1,600,000.

The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (*TLC*), a land trust, is a major partner in land acquisitions. *TLC* has partnered with CRD Parks to acquire properties in the Sea-to-Sea Green Blue Belt, land on southwest Salt Spring Island, Gowlland Point on South Pender Island, land adjacent to Millstream Creek, and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and land connecting Mount Work and Thetis Lake regional parks.

For more information, see www.crd.bc.ca/parks/preservation/newparks.htm.

42. *Summary of 2007 Acquisitions*. April 2008. Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund, Bulletin 8.

43. *ibid*

Tool 11: Leasehold Subdivision

This tool introduces a process for local government to grant subdivision approval to food producers who want to lease part of a parcel of agricultural land for longer than three years.

Description

Accessing affordable land is a challenge for both new and established farmers. Leasing is one way farmers access land.

A lease that is registered on the land title provides farmers with security. If the land is sold, the lease is transferred to the new landowner along with the title of the land. A registered lease also ensures that the agreement is legally recognized as a lease and not interpreted as another type of agreement (such as a contract) that does not give any rights in land.

If a farmer wishes to register a lease on part of a parcel of land for longer than three years, or with the option that the lease will extend beyond three years, the land must be subdivided.

One option for farmers wanting to lease part of a parcel of land for longer than three years is to use leasehold subdivision. Under a leasehold subdivision, approval from a local government is provided only for the term of the lease; in effect, a limited term subdivision.

When the lease expires, the subdivision expires. The parcel of land created by the leasehold subdivision cannot be transferred separately from the remainder of the parcel.⁴⁴

Generally, the process for approval of a leasehold subdivision is the same as for a regular fee simple subdivision. A surveyor prepares a plan or reference plan pursuant to the *Land Title Act*. The landowner then makes an application to the approving officer for approval of the leasehold subdivision.

A local government can amend its subdivision bylaw and/ or give direction to the approving officer not to require the same servicing and other infrastructure requirements as fee simple subdivisions. For example, approval of a leasehold subdivision may not require the installation of utilities.

If the land is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), the landowner submits an ALR application to the local government along with the appropriate fees. If the council or regional board approves the application, the local government forwards the application to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). The ALC will then approve, deny, or make requests regarding the application.

Subdivision of farmland

Most agriculturally-zoned lands (including lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve) prohibit subdivision.

Generally, subdivision of farmland is undesirable because smaller parcel sizes can compromise the productive capacity of the land and may encourage non-farm uses such as residential uses.

In addition, the subdivision process can be costly and time consuming.

44. 2006. *Easements in Lieu of Subdivision*. Lawson Lundell LLP. www.hg.org/articles/article_1562.html

Important

Section 73 of the *Land Title Act* prohibits subdivision of land, not including buildings, for the purpose of leasing for a term exceeding three years.⁴⁵ There are mixed legal opinions on the effect of this legislation on what can and cannot be done in regards to registering leases and leasehold subdivision.

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- establish a policy that supports leasehold subdivision applications for farmland to be used for food production;
- recommend applications for leasehold subdivisions to the ALC when the land is in the ALR and to be used for farm operations, and the application meets your policy for leasehold subdivisions.

A leasehold subdivision policy for farm production can establish the criteria by which staff and council evaluate applications for leasehold subdivision. For a definition of farm operation, see the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and/ or the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.

Resources

Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivisions and Procedure Regulation – Agricultural Land Commission Act (www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Legislation/Reg/ALR_Use-Subd-Proc_Reg.htm)

Agricultural Land Commission (www.alc.gov.bc.ca/)

Guide to Farmland Access Agreements. The Land Conservancy of BC (blog.conservancy.bc.ca/agriculture/a-guide-to-farmland-access-agreements/)

Land Title Act Divisions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20L%20--/Land%20Title%20Act%20%20RSBC%201996%20%20c.%20250/00_Act/96250_00.htm)

Strengthening Farming – Key Legislation. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/keylegisl.htm)

Strengthening Farming – Subdivision Approving Officers Toolkit. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/planag/subdiv.htm)

Subdividing in BC, Roles and Authorities. Government of British Columbia (www.th.gov.bc.ca/DA/L2_roles_auth.asp)

45. *Land Title Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c.250.

Tool 12: Government Land Lease

This tool introduces a process for local government to lease land for food production, support sustainable uses of public land, and protect and enhance the environment.

Description

Accessing affordable land is a challenge for both new and established farmers. Leasing is one way farmers access land.

Farmers can lease Provincial Crown land through extensive⁴⁶ and intensive⁴⁷ leases.

As a local government, you can also lease or rent public land to farmers. This creates opportunities to support your local economy, increase food security, and support community development.

Leasing land for farming is also an effective way for you to protect and enhance the environment. For example, you can require that farm leases include environmental management guidelines that protect locally important wildlife, restrict use of synthetic pesticides, and include mandatory carbon sequestration services. There are resources and organizations available to help you develop your own environmental management guidelines, including the Environmental Farm Plan Program and The Land Conservancy of BC (see Resources).

Activities

Farmers spend considerable time, effort, and money to keep land in a productive state. Long-term leases provide security for this investment.

As a local government, you can:

- use land inventories from your Agricultural Area Plan (Tool 4) to identify potential local government and provincial Crown lands that are available for lease or rent to farm operations;
- provide long-term leases for sustainable food production;
- set environmental management guidelines in farmland leases to help protect and enhance the environment;
- partner with local organizations to identify and conserve local values.

46. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *How to Apply for Crown Land: Agriculture – Extensive*.

(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/clad/tenure_programs/programs/agricultureex/index.html)

47. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *How to Apply for Crown Land: Agriculture – Intensive*.

(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/clad/tenure_programs/programs/agriculturein/index.html)

Community Farms Program

You can work with a land trust to place a covenant on the land to maintain desired land uses for future generations. Other organizations can help draft farming guidelines that are linked to local environment and social concerns and priorities.

Determine your best role in managing the public lands that you provide for lease. Some local governments act only in the capacity of lessor (the party leasing out the land), while others take a role in land management.

For example, the District of Saanich leases Haliburton Community Organic Farm to a society, which is responsible for finding farmers and managing the day to day operations of the site in accordance with the terms of the lease. In Lincoln, Massachusetts, the Conservation Commission administers the farmer selection and monitoring process directly (see Tools in Action).

Resources

Agriculture – Intensive. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/clad/tenure_programs/programs/agriculturein/index.html)

Agriculture – Extensive. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/clad/tenure_programs/programs/agricultureex/index.html)

Guide to Farmland Access Agreements. The Land Conservancy of BC
(blog.conservancy.bc.ca/agriculture/a-guide-to-farmland-access-agreements/)

Whole Farm Plan Guide. The Land Conservancy of BC (available January 2010)

Environmental Farm Plan Program. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/EnviroFarmPlanning/index.htm)

Tool in Action

District of Saanich – Farm lease⁴⁸

From 1984 to 2006, the District of Saanich leased approximately 8.5 acres of floodplain to a farm operation.

Key terms in the lease agreement stated that:

- the land was to be used for agricultural or horticultural purposes only;
- the farmer must arrange their own water supply;
- farm activities must be limited to the rented area;

48. Personal communication. Feb 11, 2009. District of Saanich.

- a minimum set back of 50 feet from the top bank of fish-bearing Colquitz Creek is maintained;
- the farmer must give three months notice to vacate;
- the landlord must give six months notice to vacate, with a provision for reasonable extension for crop removal.

The District charged \$1,375 plus GST per year for the land. This approximately covered the costs of setting up and administering the lease.

Lincoln, Massachusetts – Lincoln Conservation Commission

In Lincoln, Massachusetts, the municipal Conservation Commission leases 180 acres of their conservation lands for agriculture.

In their words, “[t]his beneficial policy attracts open land wildlife . . . and supports the goals of open space, preservation of traditional landscapes, recreation, education, and maintenance of both community-based and family farming.”⁴⁹

For more information about the Conservation Commission, see Lincoln, Massachusetts – Conservation Commission (www.lincolntown.org/depts/conserve.htm).

For farming guideline documents, agreements, and requests for farmers used by the Conservation Commission, see www.home.earthlink.net/~steveells/LCC/index.html.

49. Wildlife-friendly leasing of farmland owned by a municipal conservation commission: an example in Lincoln, Massachusetts. ([home.earthlink.net/~steveells/LCC/index.html](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~steveells/LCC/index.html))

Tool 13: Infrastructure

This tool introduces opportunities for local government to develop and support the local infrastructure that is associated with food production.

Description

Food production requires supporting infrastructure such as distribution points, cold storage, processing facilities, equipment dealers, repair shops, seed stores, and veterinary hospitals.

Farmer-direct distribution systems such as farm-gate sales and farmers' markets create connections between communities and farmers. This helps people understand and appreciate where their food comes from, and gives farmers direct economic support and feedback about the products their community desires.

BC farmers' markets contribute an estimated \$65.3 million annually to local economies. It has been demonstrated that this money also benefits neighbouring businesses that support farmers' market vendors for an additional \$53.3 million per year.⁵⁰

Activities

As a local government, you can incorporate infrastructure requirements into bylaws, policy and planning documents, and programs.

Use these tools to encourage food production infrastructure:

- Edge Planning*
- Tool 2: Food Charters
- Tool 3: Food System Assessment
- Tool 4: Agricultural Area Plan
- Tool 6: Official Community Plan
- Tool 8: Zoning
- Regional Growth Strategy*

* From *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture* (see Resources).

These tools lay the foundation for effective community planning that supports food production now and in the future.

50. Connell, D. J., Taggart, T., Hillman K., and Humphrey, A. 2006. *Economic and community impacts of farmers' markets in British Columbia*. British Columbia Association of Farmers' Markets and the School of Environmental Planning, University of Northern British Columbia.

Resources

Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities of British Columbia.

West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation
(www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf)

Small Scale Food Processor Association. ssfpa.net/

Tool in Action

Saskatoon Farmers' Market

The Saskatoon Farmers' Market finally found a permanent home when the City of Saskatoon renovated a former city electrical garage and offices for an indoor farmers' market and public market space. The market opened in May 2007.

This project was completed as part of the River Landing Project (redevelopment of the A.L. Cole site) by partners City of Saskatoon, Province of Saskatchewan, and the Government of Canada.

For more information on the Saskatoon Farmers' Market, see www.saskatoonfarmersmarket.com/. For more information on the River Landing Project, see www.riverlanding.ca/.

Maple Ridge Agricultural Area Plan development process

In May 2009, Maple Ridge released *Phase 2 Report: Discussion of issues, preferred options and recommended actions pertaining to the Maple Ridge Agricultural Area Planning Process*. This report identifies development of local food system infrastructure as an issue to be addressed in the Agricultural Area Plan.

Recommendations for action include:

- Partner with like-minded interests in adjacent municipalities to take advantage of regional opportunities
- Include agri-industrial considerations in District economic planning and land use

For more information, see the Phase 2 report.

(www.mapleridge.ca/assets/Default/Clerks/Committees~and~Commissions/Agricultural~Advisory~Committee/pdfs/ag_report_phase2_05-21-2009.pdf)

British Columbians like to buy direct

Nearly nine-in-ten British Columbians (88%) say they like to buy directly from farms and farmers' markets, including 34% who "strongly agree" they like to buy directly.

Source: *Poll of public opinions toward agriculture, food and agri-food production in BC*. 2008. IPSOS Reid Public Affairs. Prepared for the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

Tool 14: Extension Services

This tool introduces a method for local governments to provide professional agricultural support and resources to farmers and communities.

Description

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada have historically provided extension services for food production. Local governments can also offer regionally-designed extension services.

Extension services provide support and information on technical aspects of food production. They can also go beyond direct delivery to farmers. For example, regional extension agents can work with local real estate agencies to help increase understanding about agricultural zoning and the potential conflicts between farmers and residential landowners.

Agriculture extension staff can ‘interpret’ between farmers and local government, and recommend and organize activities to address identified local extension needs, such as sensitive ecosystems assessment and restoration.

Activities

Extension services designed around sustainable food production for the community can be identified as actions in a food charter (Tool 2), Food System Assessment (Tool 3), and Agricultural Area Plan (Tool 4).

As a local government, you can:

- hire a staff planner/ agrologist who understands sustainable food production;
- partner with:
 - local organizations⁵¹ to hold workshops for farmers⁵²;
 - adjoining municipalities/ regional districts to share costs and services;
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to hold workshops for farmers and farm market organizers on laws and regulations related to farming and food sales;

51. Many agencies in BC deliver valuable programs, such as The Land Conservancy of BC, Farm Folk/City Folk, BC Assessment, universities and colleges, local accountants, and business consultants.

52. Useful workshop topics include: ecosystem assessment, environmental farm planning, farm succession planning, farm classification, tax exemption options, basic business practices, business development, marketing, and planning for viable farm operations.

- universities and colleges to deliver specific programs;
- provide web resources to support:
 - a database of agricultural land available for rent;
 - networks between farmers and social service agencies for the purchase/ donation of surplus produce⁵³.

Resources

Agri-Teams. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Contacts.htm)

BC Agricultural Research and Development Corporation (ARDCorp)
(www.ardcorp.ca/)

BC Assessment (www.bcassessment.bc.ca/)

British Columbia Real Estate Association (www.bcrea.bc.ca/)

Certified Organic Associations of BC (www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/)

Strengthening Farming. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/about.htm)

University of Victoria Restoration of Natural Systems Program
(www.uvcs.uvic.ca/aspnet/Program/Detail/?code=RNS-CERT)

University of British Columbia Sauder School of Business.
Continuing professional development, including training for real estate professionals in green real estate. (www1.sauder.ubc.ca/)

Tool in Action

District of Summerland – Agricultural irrigation workshop

In March 2009, the District of Summerland and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands delivered a full-day workshop on sprinkler and drip irrigation for Summerland farmers. The instructors (an agrologist and engineer from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands) showcased various local agricultural water projects, and demonstrated water management tools that help farmers use water more efficiently.

Workshop topics included:

- Soil, water, and climate
- Summerland Agricultural Metering and Irrigation Scheduling Program
- Sprinkler Irrigation System Assessment
- Agricultural Irrigation Scheduling Calculators

53. For example, in 2008, H&R Veggies and Sunbird Farms at Haliburton Community Organic Farm donated produce worth approximately \$1,600 to Our Place Society through weekly donations.

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- Drip Irrigation System Assessment
- Okanagan Irrigation Management website (OKIM)

For more information, contact the Summerland Water Conservation Officer.

Regional District of Central Okanagan – Agricultural Support Officer

In 2006, the Regional District of Central Okanagan established an Agricultural Support Officer position as a two year pilot project within their Economic Development department.

Their 2005 *Agricultural Area Plan* (AAP) recommended the position to address the lack of “. . . local resources to assist with promotion and enhancement of agricultural opportunities” for the farm community.

The AAP emphasized that agricultural industry in the Central Okanagan could benefit from additional support in the areas of “. . . business planning, educational opportunities, improved access to information, and avenues to liaise with other agencies and institutions associated with agriculture”.

When the AAP was completed, there was no local coordination to help the agricultural industry access this support.

General competencies listed for the Agricultural Support Officer included:

- Technical training and familiarity with agriculture
- Able to work directly with farmers and the farming community
- Knowledge of the tools and techniques of business planning
- Experience working within the policy structure of the regional district

For more information, see www.regionaldistrict.com/.

100 Mile House – Agriculture Enterprise Development Centre

In 100 Mile House, local government, producers, community organizations, First Nations, and others are coming together to establish the Agriculture Enterprise Development Centre (AEDC). The AEDC is a “. . . shared-use and business development facility in 100 Mile House that will facilitate new agricultural product development and business expansion in the South Cariboo.”

For more information, see:
www.100milehouse.com/index.php?page=41.

Tool 15: Riparian Area Tax Exemption

This tool introduces a process for local governments to exempt property taxes on protected riparian areas of agricultural land.

Description

Riparian areas (land adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, and wetlands) provide multiple benefits to communities. They:

- filter sediment, nutrients, agricultural chemicals, and other pollutants from surface runoff;
- decrease flood severity;
- protect streambanks from erosion;
- provide food, water, and cover for many species of wildlife;
- provide shade, food, and reduced water temperatures for fish and other animals and plants that live in the water;
- provide leaf litter and wood debris to waterbodies;
- provide travel corridors for a wide variety of wildlife.⁵⁴

Section 811 of the *Local Government Act* and section 225 of the *Community Charter* grant local governments the power to establish bylaws exempting eligible riparian areas from property tax for up to ten years. This exemption encourages land owners to maintain and protect riparian areas on their property.

Both the *Local Government Act* and the *Community Charter* require the property receiving the tax exemption to be subject to a covenant under section 219 of the *Land Title Act*.

However, Section 22(b) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* states, “A covenant that prohibits the use of agricultural land for farm purposes has no effect until approved by the commission.”

The ALC provides guidelines related to covenants on ALR land (see Resources). Covenants on non-ALR land do not require approval from the ALC.

Both the *Local Government Act* and the *Community Charter* allow a riparian exemption bylaw to specify additional requirements beyond the covenant restrictions. For example, the bylaw must specify its term, which can be for up to 10 years.

54. Island Nature Trust and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. n.d. *Best management practices for riparian zones in Nova Scotia*.

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Agricultural activities are not yet subject to the *Riparian Areas Regulation (Fish Protection Act)*, as riparian protection is covered by other initiatives.⁵⁵

In some cases, a riparian area on farmland may receive Residential Classification from BC Assessment because it is not under production. The remainder of the property may be classified as Farm Land, which is taxed at a lower tax rate.

This situation gives a landowner no incentive to maintain the riparian area, and encourages farmers to put as much of the riparian area into production as possible to receive a lower tax rate.

Landowners face certain costs to obtain a tax exemption for a riparian area. They pay:

- an application fee to their local government;
- for a survey plan and baseline report;
- to register a covenant;
- for legal and tax advice.

If a landowner withdraws or violates the covenant, they may be responsible for repaying previously exempted taxes plus interest.

Activities

As a local government, you can:

- use your Agricultural Area Plan to identify effective areas for riparian tax exemption;
- enact a Riparian Area Tax Exemption bylaw;
- review conservation covenants for eligibility for tax exemption;
- recommend that the Agricultural Land Commission approve registration of conservation covenants on Agricultural Land Reserve land;

You can also use the Community Mapping Network to help you identify areas for a Riparian Area Tax Exemption bylaw (see Resources).

For more information on developing a tax exemption bylaw, see Resources.

55. www.env.gov.bc.ca/habitat/fish_protection_act/riparian/riparian_areas.html

Resources

Community Mapping Network (cmnbc.ca/about-cmn)

Community Charter Division 7 (Permissive Exemptions), Section 225 (Partnering, heritage, riparian and other special exemption authority) (www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20C%20--/Community%20Charter%20%20SBC%202003%20%20c.%2026/00Act/03026_00.htm)

Green Bylaws Toolkit, Chapter 8, Tax Exemptions for Conservation (www.greenbylaws.ca)

Guidelines for Conservation Covenants in the ALR. Agricultural Land Commission (www.alc.gov.bc.ca/legislation/legislation_main.htm)

Local Government Act, Division 4.4 (Tax rates and exemptions) Section 811 (Exemptions for riparian properties) (www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/96323_00)

Permissive Tax Exemptions. Ministry of Community Development. (www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/gov_structure/community_charter/finance/permissive_exemptions.htm)

Riparian Areas Regulation. Environmental Stewardship Division, Ministry of Environment (env.gov.bc.ca/habitat/fish_protection_act/riparian/riparian_areas.html)

An Introduction to Conservation Covenants: A Guide for Developers and Planning Departments. Land Trust Alliance of BC (www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca/docs/Developer_Info_Kit_rev_07.pdf)

Tool in Action

Town of Gibsons – Tax Exemption (Riparian Property) Bylaw

Town of Gibsons Tax Exemption (Riparian Property) Bylaw no. 944, 2002

A Bylaw to exempt eligible riparian property on Charman Creek from taxation under the *Local Government Act*.

The Council of the Town of Gibsons, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. This Bylaw may be cited as *Town of Gibsons Riparian Area Property Tax Exemption Bylaw No. 944, 2002*.
2. Each parcel shown shaded on the map attached as schedule “A” is exempt from taxation under Section 359(1)(a) of the Local Government Act for a ten year period from 2003-2013 inclusive, to the extent provided in s.4 of this Bylaw, if prior to December 31 of the year immediately preceding the first year of exemption a riparian area conservation covenant in the form attached to

Community Farms Program

this Bylaw as Schedule “B” is registered in the Land Title Office against that property.

3. The covenant that is registered in respect of any particular property may contain such additional terms and conditions as are reasonably required to account for the existing state of the riparian area on that property and the existing lawful development of the property.
4. The exemption under section 2 applies only in respect of that portion of the property that is identified as a “Riparian Area” in the covenant registered in respect of that property.
5. If there is a contravention of any of the conditions of the covenant in relation to which an exemption is provided under this Bylaw, the Council may, by bylaw adopted by at least 2/3 of the votes cast, require the owner to pay to the Town the total amount of taxes that would have been payable but for the exemption in Section 2, plus interest calculated from the date the taxes would have been payable compounded annually at the rate prescribed under the *Taxation (Rural Area) Act* for taxes in arrears.



Tool 16: Water Management

This tool introduces activities for local management and monitoring of water quantity and quality to benefit sustainable food production.

Description

Water is vital for agriculture. Sustainable food production makes efficient and effective use of this resource. While water falls primarily under provincial and federal jurisdictions, local governments also play an important role in its management.

There are many competing stakeholders for water resources (residential, industrial, agricultural, fish). It is also important to keep in mind that water systems such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands provide other essential services. They sustain wildlife, purify water, and act as a key part of nutrient cycles. Water systems are complex structures of physical (stream banks, deltas) and biological (plants, animals, insects) components.

In some parts of BC, agriculture consumes up to 70% of surface and ground water. Irrigated crops account for 4% of BC's productive land, and 40% of farm income.⁵⁶

However, BC's water supply is facing numerous challenges. According to *Water Licenses and Conservation: Future Directions for Land Trusts in British Columbia* (2008)⁵⁷:

"Evidence of increasing water challenges can be seen across Canada and in BC. Between 1994 and 1999, one quarter of all Canadian municipalities reported water shortages as a result of high consumption, drought, or infrastructure problems. In 1999, 8% of the 300 classified aquifers in BC were found to be at risk due to heavy use. In 2003, severe droughts affected much of the Okanagan Valley and Vancouver Island, and in 2006, the Town of Tofino, on BC's "wet" coast almost ran out of water at the height of the tourist season.

Finally, 235 of 300 streams in the South Okanagan are fully recorded, which means there is no additional water available for new water licences."

As water demand increases and water availability decreases, local governments have a role to play in ensuring continued access to water for sustainable food production.

56. Living Water Smart. *Water for Agriculture*. Government of British Columbia. (www.livingwatersmart.ca/business/agriculture.html)

57. Prepared for The Land Trust Alliance of BC by Oliver Brandes and Deborah Curran. (www.waterdsm.org/publication/172)

Community Farms Program

Activities

All activities local governments engage in to manage water quantity and quality will benefit sustainable food production.

Specifically, you can:

- collect information on current and future water needs for agriculture in your area, including conservation practices⁵⁸ (see Tool in Action, Capital Regional District);
- include agricultural representatives on water decision-making and advisory bodies;
- evaluate the efficiency of other users (residential, industrial) before reducing water availability for food production;
- review agricultural water rates for disparities within and between regional districts;
- develop a Water Use Plan to ensure a balance of water available for farmers, fish, and the community, even in drought years;
- make reclaimed water available for agricultural irrigation;
- hold agriculture irrigation workshops (see Tool 14, Extension Services, Tool in Action, District of Summerland);
- promote riparian area tax exemptions (see Tool 15, Riparian Area Tax Exemptions). Healthy riparian areas protect both water quality and quantity.

The Water Use Plan process, developed by the Ministry of Environment and used extensively by BC Hydro, helps develop consensus on operating rules that recognize all water stakeholders (see Tool in Action, District of Summerland).

Resources

Agricultural Irrigation Calculator. Irrigation Industry Association of British Columbia (www.irrigationbc.com/)

Does Pricing Water Reduce Agricultural Demand? An Example from British Columbia. Government of Canada (www.policyresearch.gc.ca/doclib/BN_SD_PricingWater_200702_e.pdf)

Groundwater Bylaws Toolkit: An Appendix to the Green Bylaws Toolkit. Okanagan Basin Water Board (www.obwb.ca/groundwater_bylaws_toolkit/)

58. This information can inform water rates for the agricultural sector.

Land Use Changes and Agriculture. Environment Canada
(www.ec.gc.ca/INRE-NWRI/default.asp?lang=En&n=0CD66675-1&offset=12&toc=show)

Living Water Smart. Government of British Columbia
(www.livingwatersmart.ca/)

Publications and Conceptual Plans: Water. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/Water.htm)

Using the Water Use Plan process as a framework for drought management planning
(www.waterbucket.ca/aw/index.asp?sid=65&id=89&type=single)

Water Licenses and Conservation: Future Directions for Land Trusts in BC. 2008. The Land Trust Alliance
(www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca/docs/Water_Licence_Report_FINAL2.pdf)

Waterbucket: Sustainable Approaches to Water Resources
(www.waterbucket.ca/)

Tool in Action

Capital Regional District – Agricultural Water Use and Conservation Study

In 2005, the Capital Regional District (CRD) undertook a project to gather and analyze information on farm water use and conservation practices in the CRD. This project was carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Peninsula Agricultural Commission, with funding from the Canada – British Columbia Water Supply Expansion Program. The information was collected to support decision-making on water rates for agriculture, and to support development of a CRD water conservation program. For more information and to review the report, see www.waterbucket.ca/wcp/index.asp?sid=68&id=369&type=single.

District of Summerland – Trout Creek reservoirs⁵⁹

The primary water sources for the District of Summerland are reservoirs located in the mountains. The reservoirs are heavily dependent on snow pack. A water use plan became necessary for Summerland when water demands exceeded supply. Agriculture uses about 80% of Summerland's water supply. Other key stakeholders are residential and industrial users, and fish.

59. Personal Communication. Feb 25, 2009. Joe Fitzpatrick, P.Ag., Water Conservation/ Cross Connections Summerland Water Treatment Plant.
(www.summerland.ca/departments/works/waterconservation.aspx)

Community Farms Program

In 2004/ 2005, the Trout Creek Water Use Plan Consultative Committee developed an *Operating Agreement for the Trout Creek Reservoirs (Water Use Plan)*. Members included representatives from the District of Summerland, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Agricultural Water Users, and the Penticton Indian Band.

The Water Use Plan process was developed by the BC Ministry of Environment, and is used extensively by BC Hydro. The Water Use Plan lays out a set of rule curves on how reservoirs are managed depending on water reservoir levels in the summer months.⁶⁰

In addition, the District of Summerland:

- hired an agrologist as a Water Conservation Coordinator (2006);
- developed an Okanagan Irrigation Management water use reporting tool in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and others (a subscription is required for use, see www.okim.ca);
- held irrigation scheduling workshops to teach producers and others how to use the new online Agricultural Irrigation Calculator (the calculator is available for free at www.irrigationbc.com);
- incorporated the water strategy into the region's Agricultural Plan, including: water supply/ demand risk assessment, source water protection plan, drought management plan, water-use information for farmers, and a water infrastructure plan (see www.summerland.ca);
- committed to universal water metering.

City of Vernon – Water reclamation and irrigation

The City of Vernon reclaims waste water from its population of 36,000 through tertiary treatment at the Vernon Water Reclamation Centre. The reclaimed water is stored in the MacKay Reservoir.

This water is used to irrigate about 2,400 acres of land, including Vernon Seed Orchard, Kalamalka Forestry Centre, Pacific Regeneration's Vernon Nursery, large areas of agricultural land used for grazing and hay production, Predator Ridge Golf Resort, and the Vernon Golf and Country Club.

Solids from the water treatment process are dewatered, composted, and sold commercially. For more information, see City of Vernon, *Water – Reclamation and Spray Irrigation* (www.vernon.ca/services/utilities/reclamation/index.html).

60. www.summerland.ca/docs/WaterConservation/Trout%20Creek%20Water%20Use%20Plan%20Operating%20Agreement.pdf

Advocacy Item 1: Policy Guidelines on Agricultural Land Protection

This Advocacy Item suggests advocacy directed at professional associations to develop standardized policy guides that support agricultural land protection.

Description

In 1999, the American Planning Association adopted their *Policy Guide on Agricultural Land Preservation*. This policy provides planners with a framework they can use when they develop land use plans in agricultural areas and make legislative and policy recommendations.

Local government planners can advocate that their professional organizations develop policy guides that support preservation of agricultural lands.

Farmland protection policies would be more effective if individual professional organizations develop similar policy guides for their members to follow. For example, planners often rely on information from agrologists when it comes to farmland planning. Agrologists in BC belong to the BC Institute of Agrologists.

Advocate to

As employees of local government, you can advocate that your professional associations develop and adopt a policy guide on agricultural land protection.

You can advocate to:

- Planning Institute of BC
- Canadian Institute of Planners
- BC Institute of Agrologists
- Union of BC Municipalities
- Local Government Management Association

Idea in Action

American Planning Association – Policy Guide on Agricultural Land Preservation

Policy Guide on Agricultural Land Preservation

Adopted by the Chapter Delegate Assembly April 25, 1999

Ratified by the APA Board of Directors April 26, 1999⁶¹

61. www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/agricultural.htm

Summary of Key Points

- Critical agricultural land is being developed at a rate higher than population growth. The nature of agricultural production is changing and appropriate growth management techniques must recognize and be proactive to these changes.
- Most traditional zoning tools have minimal efficacy to protect against development of agricultural lands.
- Communities must develop, implement, and enforce multiple mechanisms for the effective preservation of productive agricultural land (e.g. urban growth boundaries, purchase of development rights, exclusive agricultural zoning).
- Agricultural productivity must be allowed to be a viable economic activity.
- Farming is a business that also has environmental, public, and aesthetic implications.
- Agricultural land should be protected and preserved in large contiguous blocks in order to maintain a “critical mass” of farms and agricultural land.
- Agricultural land preservation must be distinguished from open space preservation, and must be viewed as protecting commercially-viable farms and productive agricultural land which incidentally provide open-space amenities.
- Right-to-Farm provisions/ protections must be included in agricultural land preservation programs, plans, and policies.
- Environmental stewardship must be integral with effective agricultural land preservation programs, plans, and policies (e.g. erosion management, ground water protection, buffering).
- Taxation strategies should be developed to discourage the conversion of agricultural land to other uses.
- The extension of urban services into agricultural areas should be discouraged.
- Implementation of agricultural land preservation programs, projects, and policies are best implemented and enforced at the local level with technical and financial support from state and federal sources.
- Viability of the local economy, especially a strong commercial “core”, is essential to the long-term preservation of agricultural lands.

Advocacy Item 2: Tax Exemption for Ecologically Sensitive Areas

This Advocacy Item suggests advocacy to amend provincial legislation to allow local governments to establish bylaws exempting ecologically sensitive areas from municipal property tax.

Description

Both sustainable farming and public ecological benefits rely on retention of ecologically sensitive areas.

Under BC Assessment's current system, land not under agricultural production may receive a higher tax classification (Residential instead of Farm). This system discourages farmers from leaving ecologically sensitive areas out of production.

Section 811 of the *Local Government Act* and Section 225 of the *Community Charter* grant local governments the power to establish bylaws exempting riparian areas from property tax for up to ten years.

This exemption encourages landowners to maintain and protect riparian areas on their property. A similar provision for ecological sensitive areas would encourage farmers to maintain and protect ecologically sensitive areas on their farms.

Eligible ecologically sensitive areas can be identified through Sensitive Ecosystem Inventories and related mapping projects. So far, the provincial government has completed Sensitive Ecosystem Inventories for East Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands and the Sunshine Coast, Central Okanagan, Bella Vista, and South Okanagan.⁶² Many local governments have completed inventories, in particular for riparian areas, including the District of Saanich, the Central Okanagan Regional District, and the City of Nanaimo.

Advocate to

As a local government, you can advocate that the *Local Government Act (Section 811)* and the *Community Charter (Section 225)* be amended to allow local governments to establish bylaws exempting ecologically sensitive areas from municipal property tax.

Advocate to:

- Ministry of Community Development
- Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- Ministry of Environment

62. Ministry of Environment. n.d. Sensitive Ecosystem Inventories. Retrieved August 16, 2009 from www.env.gov.bc.ca/sei/.

Idea in Action

Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program

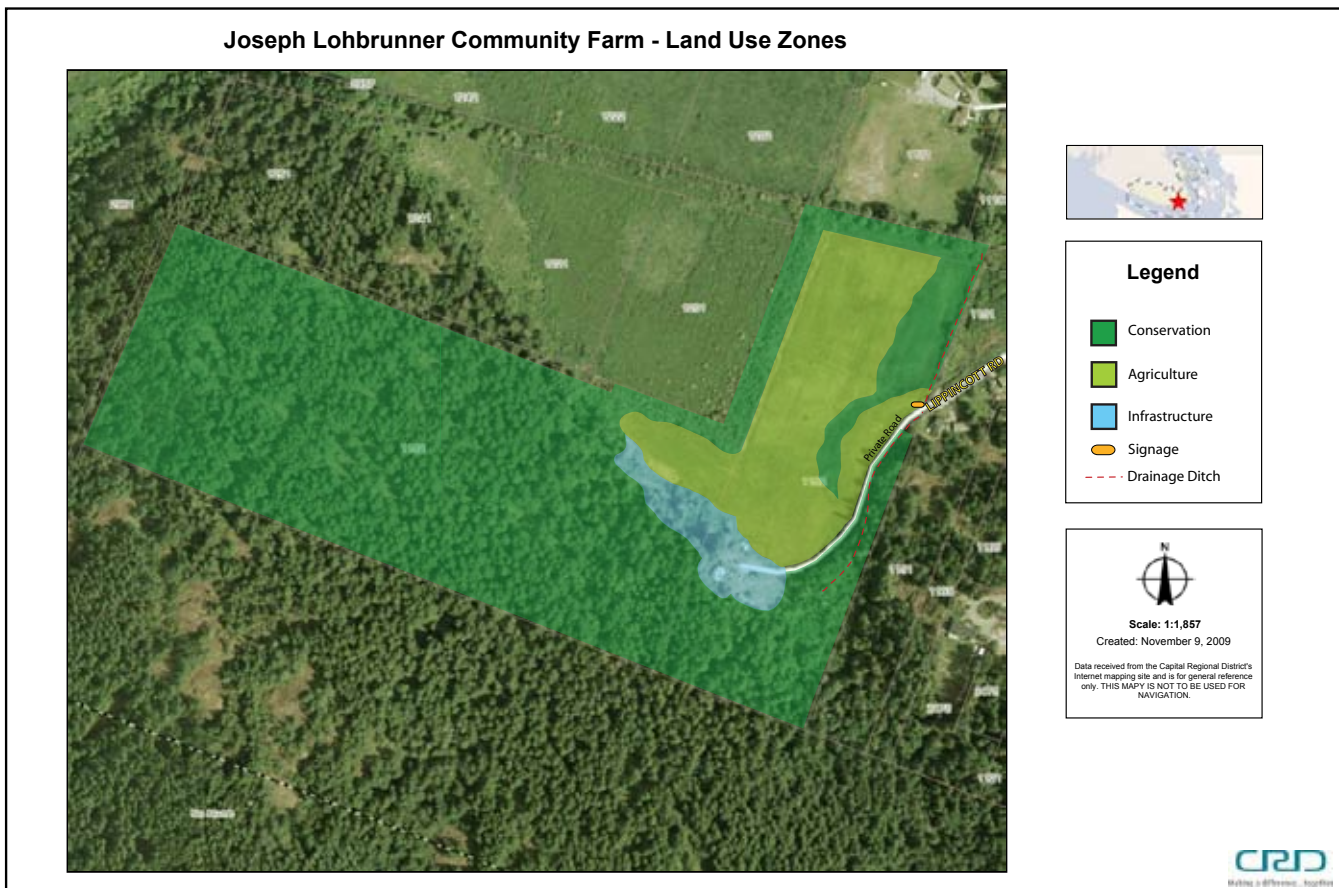
The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NATEP) is an example of using tax exemptions for ecologically sensitive areas. Land owners in the Islands Trust, the Regional District of Nanaimo, and the Cowichan Valley Regional District are eligible for the program.

Land in the Agricultural Land Reserve is not eligible as ALR land already receives a 50% value exemption for school and hospital taxes.

Landowners follow a two step application process that includes registering a covenant on the ecologically sensitive area. In return, they receive a 65% reduction in property taxes on the protected portion of their land.

This exemption is made possible by the *Islands Trust Act, Islands Trust Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Regulation*.

See www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptep.cfm for more information about NATEP, and the case study in the *Green Bylaws Toolkit*, pages 87-89 (www.greenbylaws.ca).



Advocacy Item 3: Accounting for Ecological Goods and Services

This Advocacy Item suggests advocacy to senior government that their regulations, policies, and programs recognize, value, and compensate farmers for the provision of public ecological goods and services.

For more information on ecological services and farmland, see *Farmers Helping to Sustain Community Health and Well-Being*, Kingfisher, Volume 20, Winter/ Spring 2010.⁶³

Description

Ecological goods and services are critical for the functioning of life support systems on earth. Urban development drastically alters ecosystems and the goods and services they provide.

Farmland can protect and provide ecological goods and services that benefit both urban residents and food production.

Ecological goods and services are benefits that people receive from ecosystems.⁶⁴

Ecological goods and services include:⁶⁵

- provisioning services or goods (food, water, timber, fibre);
- regulatory services (affect climate, floods, disease, waste);
- cultural services (provide recreational, aesthetic, spiritual opportunities);
- supporting services (soil formation, photosynthesis, nutrient cycling).

When the public wants farmers to provide ecological goods and services, and that provision will decrease the farmers' income by limiting their production potential and/ or increasing their cost of doing business, the public should compensate the farmer.

Several countries pay producers for ecological goods and services to encourage their production from agricultural land. Currently, Canada has no federal policy to create a market for ecological goods and services.

The Conservation Security Program in the United States pays agricultural producers for actions that generate ecological goods and services. The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy states

63. www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca/kingfisher.html

64. Costanza, R., d'Arge, R., de Groot, R., Farber, S., Grasso, M., Hannon, B., Limburg, K., Naeem, S., O'Neill, R.V., Paruelo, J., Raskin, R.G., Sutton, P. & van den Belt, M. 1997. *The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital*. Nature, 387, 253-260.

65. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. 2005. *Ecosystems and human well-being: Synthesis*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

that wherever society desires that farmers deliver an environmental service beyond a baseline level, this service should be purchased through agri-environmental payments.⁶⁶ As of 2004, payments for ecological goods and services accounted for an average 3-4% of producer support in OECD countries.⁶⁷

Multiple, interacting forces influence agricultural practices, which in turn determine the impact of agriculture on ecosystems. These forces include financial resources, policies, socio-cultural preferences, and technology, as well as how each interact with site specific ecosystem conditions.⁶⁸

Financial resources, including markets and government support, play a key role in shaping the agriculture industry and influencing its management practices. However, they have rarely, if ever, protected or produced ecological goods and services.

Markets

There are no functioning markets for ecological goods and services in Canada, so producers are generally unable to take into account the ecological costs and benefits of their actions, and market failure occurs.⁶⁹ Lack of a market is likely due to two factors, (a) ecological goods and services are not viewed as commodities within their own right, and (b) measuring and valuing ecological goods and services is a new, complex, and uncertain science.

Government support

Government support can result in ecosystem damage when it links support to agricultural production. This practice encourages farming on fragile land, and artificially lowers the costs of such inputs as

66. European Commission. 2003. *Agriculture and the environment*. Retrieved March 8, 2008 from ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/fact/envir/2003_en.pdf.

67. Joint Working Party on Agriculture and the Environment, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2004. *Agriculture and the environment: Lessons learned from a decade of OECD work*.

68. OECD. 2001. *Agriculture and biodiversity: Developing indicators for policy analysis*. Proceedings from an OECD Expert Meeting, Zurich, Switzerland.

Joint Working Party on Agriculture and the Environment, OECD. 2007. *On-Line Guide to OECD Intergovernmental Activity*. Retrieved May 23, 2007 from webnet3.oecd.org/OECDgroups/internet/ListByIndex.asp?lng=E&Expand=8.

OECD. 2007. *Agricultural policies in OECD countries: Monitoring and evaluation highlights*. Danvers, MA.

69. Market failure occurs when agricultural producers are unable to take into account the environmental costs and benefits of their activities when making management decisions (e.g. deciding whether or not to drain a wetland), because there is no economic value attached to those environmental costs and benefits. These uncounted costs and benefits are known as externalities and result in negative impacts on ecosystems by agriculture. Field & Olewiler, 2002. *Environmental Economics*. 2nd edition. McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, Canada.

energy and water.⁷⁰

If producers are not willing or able to internalize ecological costs because benefits do not outweigh costs, policies and related programs need to compensate them for protecting ecological goods and services. Otherwise, those goods and services will not be sustained.

When there are no markets for ecological goods and services, alternative policy approaches are needed to enable producers to:

- take into account their costs associated with ecological goods and services (e.g. costs associated with ecologically-friendly management activities, costs of not investing in those activities);
- identify benefits received from investments in ecological goods and services;
- develop a plan to achieve a personally-acceptable balance of stewardship costs and benefits.

Producers may choose to internalize stewardship costs, or not. Some farm businesses may wish to internalize costs, but cannot afford to do so and remain viable.

There are a number of different policy approaches that can be used to manage the impact of agriculture on ecosystems:

- Regulation
- Cross-compliance (e.g. producers need to meet environmental requirements to access government funding)
- Environmental marketing (e.g. eco-labelling)
- Voluntary approach (e.g. Canada's Environmental Farm Plan program)
- Market-based approach (e.g. tradable credits, taxes)
- One time direct payments from government
- Ongoing direct payments from government

These policy approaches are most effective when combined.

If compensation for ecological goods and services is provided, the benefits must outweigh the monetary benefits producers receive under other programs (e.g. incentives linked to production), or policy impact may be non-existent or marginal at best.

Canada does not yet have federal policies or associated programs specifically focused on creating a market for ecological goods and services from farmland. However, there are national efforts exploring options for the provision of ecological goods and services from farmland.

70. OECD. 2001. *Agriculture and biodiversity: Developing indicators for policy analysis*. Proceedings from an OECD Expert Meeting, Zurich, Switzerland.

For example, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada recently hosted a Technical Meeting that featured the results of Canadian research, pilot projects, and provincial programs that address ecological goods and services concepts and options for agri-environmental policy.

Advocate to

As a local government, you can advocate that provincial and federal government regulations, policies, and programs explicitly recognize and value the important role private farmland and farm practices play in providing public ecological goods and services.

Recognition must go beyond risk management to proactive care of our essential ecological resources, including compensation programs for farmers who provide ecological goods and services.

Advocate to:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- Ministry of Environment
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Idea in Action

Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust

The Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust is a nonprofit organization founded by farmers and conservationists in 1993. Their mission is to “. . . promote the preservation of farmland and associated wildlife habitat on the Fraser River delta through sustainable farming and land stewardship.”⁷¹

The Trust offers farmers incentives to use farm management practices that protect and enhance wildlife habitat. In effect, they compensate farmers for providing a public good as they support the continuation of farming on the Fraser River delta.

Examples of their programs include:

Grass Set-Asides

Farmers and the Trust share the cost of leaving fields sown with a mix of grass and clover for up to four years. This practice provides wildlife habitat (e.g. Townsend's vole, Northern Harrier, Short-eared owl), and improves soil quality.

Field Margin Stewardship Program

The Trust works with farmers to retain and build field margins (ditch, grass margins, and hedgerows) to improve wildlife habitat. Besides benefitting wildlife, field margins help prevent soil erosion, create

71. Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust. www.deltafarmland.ca/

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favourable microclimates for crops, and provide habitat for beneficial insects (e.g. pollinators, predatory beetles).

Prince Edward Island – Alternative Land Use Services

Following a short pilot project, the government of Prince Edward Island has initiated a full Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program. ALUS compensates farmers for activities that provide public ecological benefit.

The program is voluntary for farmers and landowners. Program goals are to reduce soil erosion and siltation of streams, improve water quality, and improve and increase wildlife habitat.

The program pays for activities that:

- allow trees to be established in buffer zones;
- retire sensitive lands (expand buffer zones with permanent grassed headlands, retire high-sloped land);
- conserve land using soil conservation structures.

Payments vary by activity. For example, the program compensates \$185/ hectare per year for buffer zone tree planting, and \$250/ hectare per year for “land under soil conservation structures”.

For more information, see:

www.gov.pe.ca/af/agweb/index.php3?number=1024407.

International ecological goods and services policies and programs

The United Kingdom, European Union, United States, and Australia have implemented a variety of national policies and programs that create markets for ecological goods and services. Programs vary in focus and delivery.

The United Kingdom’s Environmental Stewardship scheme requires farmers to meet a minimum level of environmental performance before they are eligible for payments for targeted goods and services. This is a three-tiered scheme with payments for over 50 management options.⁷²

The Australian government purchases environmental services from farmers through an auction system for carrying out agreed-upon actions beyond their regulated environmental responsibilities. Currently, Australia is focusing on nationally endangered or vulnerable species and ecological communities, migratory species, wetlands, and natural values associated with world and national heritage places.⁷³

72. Natural England. *Environmental Stewardship*. Retrieved May 15, 2009 www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/default.aspx

73. Australian Government. *Caring for our Country*. Retrieved, May 28, 2009 from www.nrm.gov.au/

Part V Resources

This section lists additional resources that local government staff and elected officials can consult when seeking information about sustainable food production.

Use this section to find information related to:

[Policy and planning](#)

[Guides and toolkits](#)

[Reports and statistics](#)

[Government](#)

[Environment](#)

[Links to other resources](#)

[Organizations](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)



Policy and Planning

Policy

Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning. American Planning Association.

www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm

What Can and Should Local Governments do to Protect and Enhance Local Agriculture? CRD RoundTable on the Environment. Food and Agriculture Subcommittee.

www.crd.bc.ca/rte/documents/RTEAgriculturalLegalandPolicyAnalysis2009.pdf

Planning

ALR and Community Planning Guidelines. Agricultural Land Commission.

www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Publications/Community_Planning_Guidelinescolour.pdf

Communities in Transition: Planning for Community Transition in Non-Metropolitan Regions. Real Estate Foundation of BC.

www.realestatefoundation.com/citsummary.html

How Food Shapes our Cities. Carolyn Steel, TED Talks.

blog.ted.com/2009/10/how_food_shapes.php#

Planning for Agriculture. BC Agricultural Land Commission.

www.alc.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/Planning_for_Agriculture/index.htm

Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities.

www.ctplanningforagriculture.com/guide.php

Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for North Carolina Municipalities.

www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/31721/FINAL_NCP4Ag_AFT.pdf

Strengthening Farming: Planning for Agriculture. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/planag/index.htm

What Can and Should Local Governments do to Protect and Enhance Local Agriculture? CRD RoundTable on the Environment. Food and Agriculture Subcommittee.

www.crd.bc.ca/rte/documents/RTEAgriculturalLegalandPolicyAnalysis2009.pdf

Guides and Toolkits

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[Committees](#)

[Communication](#)

[Conservation covenant](#)

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[Farmland and farming](#)

[Food system](#)

[Indicators](#)

[Land rental](#)

[Procurement policy](#)

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Bylaws

Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/800Series/840000-1.pdf

Green Bylaws Toolkit for Conserving Sensitive Ecosystems and Green Infrastructure. The Wetland Stewardship Project, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia, Environment Canada, and the Province of British Columbia.

www.greenbylaws.ca/images/greenbylaws_web1207.pdf

Committees

Agricultural Advisory Committee Information Package. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/aac/package.htm

Communication

Agricultural Awareness Toolkit Introduction and Contents. Ontario Farm Animal Council.

www.ofac.org/agri_resources/AgAwarenessToolkitintro.php

How to communicate with the public. Ontario Farm Animal Council.

www.ofac.org/pdf/toolkit/Communicate%20With%20the%20Public.pdf

Conservation Covenant

Guidelines for Conservation Covenants in the ALR. Agricultural Land Commission.

www.alc.gov.bc.ca/legislation/legislation_main.htm

Community Farms Program

Density Bonus Provision

Density Bonusing. BC Climate Action Toolkit.

www.toolkit.bc.ca/tool/density-bonusing

Obtaining amenity contributions from new urban development projects. Discussion paper for the City of Victoria, BC. February 2007. Coriolis Consulting Corp.

Farmland and Farming

ALR and Community Planning Guidelines. Agricultural Land Commission.

www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Publications/Community_Planning_Guidelinescolour.pdf

Our farmlands, Our foodlands, Our future: A findings report on tools and strategies for ensuring productive and accessible farmlands in the CRD. Farmlands Project.

lifecyclesproject.ca/conferences/focusonfarmlands/Our-Farmlands-Our-Foodlands-Conference-Findings-Report-07-2009.pdf

Protecting the Working Landscape: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities. 2005. West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation. www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2005/14233.pdf

Working with the Reserves and Local Governments. Agricultural Land Commission.

www.alc.gov.bc.ca/commission/working_ALR-locgov.htm

Food System

A Seat at the Table: Resource Guide for Local Governments to Promote Food Secure Communities. BC Provincial Health Services Authority. www.islandstrust.bc.ca/poi/pdf/itpoirptfoodsecurity.pdf

Community Food System Assessment Guide for British Columbia. Simon Fraser University.

www.sfu.ca/cscd/research/food_security/

Community Food Assessment Guide. BC Provincial Health Services Authority.

www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/76D687CF-6596-46FE-AA9A-A536D61FB038/28451/PHSAreportCFAcommunityfoodassessmentguide.pdf

Food Security: A Primer for Municipal and Regional Candidates. BC Food Systems Network.

www.fooddemocracy.org/policy.php

From the Ground Up: A Primer for Community Action on Kingston and Countryside's Food System. National Farmers Union.

www.fooddowntheroad.ca/online/PDFs/fullprimer-screenres.pdf

Improving Access to Healthy Foods – A Guide for Policy Makers. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

www.rwjf.org/files/research/accesshealthyfoodsrlhc2007.pdf

What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide to Community Food Assessment. Community Food Security Coalition.

www.foodsecurity.org/cfa_guidebook.html

Indicators

Charting growth: Sustainable food indicators. Wallace Center.

wallacecenter.org/our-work/current-initiatives/sustainable-food-indicators/sustainable-indicators-report/draft-report-charting-growth-sustainable-food-indicators/

Developing a vibrant and sustainable regional food system: Suggestions for community-based groups. Value Chain Partnerships.

www.valuechains.org/NR/rdonlyres/1F208B96-FA4D-46D8-84D7-8B8FEA5CA9F0/107446/web_2006aug.pdf

Development of indicators for a sustainable food system. Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs.

www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/pdf/food-indicators-0908.pdf

Specification of indicators and selection methodology for a potential community demonstration project. Report for CMHC/NRCan.

www.sxd.sala.ubc.ca/17_research%20roundtable/Food_pkg.pdf

Land Rental

Guide to Farmland Access Agreements. The Land Conservancy of BC.

blog.conservancy.bc.ca/agriculture/a-guide-to-farmland-access-agreements/

Procurement Policy

A guide to developing a sustainable food purchasing policy.

Download from the British Columbia Working Group and Network on Sustainability Education.

www.walkingthetalk.bc.ca/node/1180

Subdivision

Strengthening Farming – Subdivision Approving Officers Toolkit. BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/planag/subdiv.htm

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Water

Agricultural Irrigation Calculator. Irrigation Industry Association of British Columbia.

www.irrigationbc.com/

Using the Water Use Plan process as a framework for drought management planning.

www.waterbucket.ca/aw/index.asp?sid=65&id=89&type=single

Reports and Statistics

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[Farmland](#)

[Food system](#)

[Procurement policy](#)

[Public opinion](#)

[Self-reliance](#)

[Statistics](#)

[Water](#)

Economic

Local Food, Farms & Jobs: Growing the Illinois Economy. Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force.

www.foodfarmsjobs.org/

Investigating the Potential Economic Impacts of Local Foods for Southeast Iowa. Department of Economics, Iowa State University.

www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/seiowa.pdf

The Cost of Eating in BC 2009: Low-income British Columbians can't afford healthy food. Dietitians of Canada, BC Region, and the Community Nutritionists Council of BC.

www.dietitians.ca/resources/resourcesearch.asp?fn=view&contentid=1944

Public Amenity Benefits and Ecological Services Provided by Farmland to Local Communities in the Fraser Valley. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/publications/Public_Amenity_Benefits_report.pdf

Why Local Linkages Matter: Findings from the Local Food Economy Study. Sustainable Seattle.

sustainableseattle.org/Programs/LFE%20Files/LFE%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf

Farmland

Forever Farmland: Reshaping the Agricultural Land Reserve for the 21st Century. David Suzuki Foundation.

www.davidsuzuki.org/files/SWAG/DSF-ALR-final3.pdf

BC's Agricultural Land Reserve: A Legal Review of the Question of Community Need. SmartGrowth BC.

www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Portals/0/Downloads/Community_need_and_the_ALR_legal_review.pdf

Food System

Food connects us all: Sustainable local food in Southern Ontario. Metcalf Foundation.

www.ourgreenbelt.ca/sites/ourgreenbelt.ca/files/Food%20Connects%20Us%20All.pdf

Local food systems and public policy: A review of the literature. Carleton University.

www.bitsandbytes.ca/resources/Local_Food_Systems_and_Public_Policy_-_A_Review_of_the_Literature.pdf

Perspectives on Community Based Food Security Projects. BC Provincial Health Services Authority.

www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/76D687CF-6596-46FE-AA9A-A536D61FB038/16876/PHSA002reportWEB.pdf

Procurement Policy

Bringing Local Food Home: Legal, regulatory and institutional barriers to local food. Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation Occasional Paper Series 7.

www.cielap.org/pub/pub_foodlegalbarriers.php

British Columbia – Municipal Food Procurement Policies. Letter from Sack Goldblatt Mitchell LLP to Mr. Darryl Walker, President, BC Government and Service Employees' Union.

www.bitsandbytes.ca/resources/British_Columbia_-_Municipal_Food_Procurement_Policies.pdf

Local food procurement policies: A literature review. Ecology Action Centre for the Nova Scotia Department of Energy.

www.organicagcentre.ca/Docs/LocalFoodProcurementPolicies.pdf

Public Opinion

Poll of public opinions toward agriculture, food and agri-food production in BC. IPSOS Reid Public Affairs.

www.gov.bc.ca/al/attachments/iaf_survey_final_report_dec_17.pdf

Community Farms Program

The sustainability poll 2006: Quantitative analysis of interviews with 560 Canadian thought leaders and 2,500 members of the public. McAllister Opinion Research. To obtain a copy, email info@sustain.we.ca

Self-Reliance

British Columbia's Food Self-Reliance. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/Food_Self_Reliance/BCFoodSelfReliance_Report.pdf

Statistics

Agriculture in Brief. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm#Agriculture_in_Brief

Water

Does Pricing Water Reduce Agricultural Demand? An Example from British Columbia. Policy Research Initiative. Government of Canada.

www.policyresearch.gc.ca/doclib/SD_BN_SEKID_e.pdf

Land Use Changes and Agriculture. Environment Canada.

www.ec.gc.ca/INRE-NWRI/default.asp?lang=En&n=0CD66675-1&offset=12&toc=show

Water Licenses and Conservation: Future Directions for Land Trusts in British Columbia. Land Trust Alliance.

poliswaterproject.org/sites/default/files/Water_Licence_Report_FINAL2.pdf

Government

General

[Land lease](#)

[Legislation and regulations](#)

[Parcel tax](#)

[Permissive tax exemptions](#)

[Subdivision](#)

General

Agri-Teams. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Contacts.htm

Agricultural Land Commission. www.alc.gov.bc.ca/

British Columbia Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for BC Families. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/Agriculture_Plan/

Food Security. Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport.
www.hls.gov.bc.ca/healthyeating/foodsecurity.html

Strengthening Farming. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.
www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/about.htm

Land Lease

Agriculture – Intensive. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.
www.agf.gov.bc.ca/clad/tenure_programs/programs/agriculturein/index.html

Agriculture – Extensive. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.
www.agf.gov.bc.ca/clad/tenure_programs/programs/agricultureex/index.html

Legislation and Regulations

Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivisions and Procedure Regulation. Agricultural Land Commission Act.
www.alc.gov.bc.ca/Legislation/Reg/ALR_Use-Subd-Proc_Reg.htm

Community Charter. Part 7 Division 4 (Parcel Taxes); Part 7 Division 7 (Permissive Exemptions).
www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20c%20--/community%20charter%20%20sbc%202003%20%20c.%2026/00_act/03026_00.htm#

Land Title Act. Part 7 Divisions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Leasing and Subdivision).
www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20L%20--/Land%20Title%20Act%20%20RSBC%201996%20%20c.%20250/00_Act/96250_00.htm

Local Government Act. Part 24 Division 4.4 (Tax rates and exemptions) Section 811 (Exemptions for riparian properties); Part 26 Division 7 Section 904. (Density Bonus Provision)
www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/freeside/--%20L%20--/Local%20Government%20Act%20%20RSBC%201996%20%20c.%20323/00_Act/96323_00.htm

Strengthening Farming – Key Legislation. BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/keylegisl.htm

Parcel Tax

Parcel Tax. Local Government Department. Ministry of Community Development.
www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/finance/parcel_tax.htm

Community Farms Program

Permissive Tax Exemptions

Permissive Tax Exemptions. Ministry of Community Development.
www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/gov_structure/community_charter/finance/permissive_exemptions.htm

Subdivision

Subdividing in BC, Roles and Authorities.
www.th.gov.bc.ca/DA/L2_roles_auth.asp

Environment

An Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1238591833203&lang=eng

Environmental Farm Plan Program. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.
www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/EnviroFarmPlanning/index.htm

Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program. Islands Trust Fund.
www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/naptepcfm

Riparian Areas Regulation. Environmental Stewardship Division, Ministry of Environment.
env.gov.bc.ca/habitat/fish_protection_act/riparian/riparian_areas.html

Links to other resources

[General](#)
[Farm Management](#)
[Food policy](#)
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General

BC Food Security Gateway.
www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Food_Security

BC Food Systems Network. fooddemocracy.org/links.php

Bits and Bytes. Database of wide variety of food system resources.
www.bitsandbytes.ca/index.php

Community Food Security Coalition. www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html

Growing Green for Sustainable Food Production.
www.ffcf.bc.ca/GrowingGreen.html

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. attra.ncat.org/

Strengthening Farming - Publications. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm

Farm Management

Whole Farm Plan Guide. The Land Conservancy of BC (available January 2010).

Food Policy

Food Policy. City of Vancouver, Community Services, Social Planning. vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/tools/links.htm

North American Food Policy Council.
www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/index.html

Sustainable food policy. www.sustainablefoodpolicy.org/

Water

Publications and Conceptual Plans: Water. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/Water.htm

Waterbucket: Sustainable Approaches to Water Resources.
www.waterbucket.ca/

Organizations

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[Provincial](#)

[National](#)

Local

Bella Coola Valley Sustainable Agricultural Society.
www.communitytransition.org/project-details.php?project_ID=36

Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable.
www.communitycouncil.ca/initiatives/crfair/index.html

Cranbrook Food Action Committee

Community Food Matters (Nelson).
www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner/cfm.htm

Creston Valley Food Action Coalition. www.crestonfarmfresh.ca/

FarmFolk/CityFolk (Vancouver). www.ffcf.bc.ca/

Food Action Society of the North Okanagan. foodaction.ca/

Food Futures Cowichan. www.cowichangreencommunity.org/

Food Link Nanaimo. www.foodlinknanaimo.com/

Food Security SOS (South Okanagan Similkameen)

Kamloops Food Policy Council

Community Farms Program

Kaslo Food Security Project. www.nklcss.org/food.php

Kootenay Food Strategy Society. www.kootenayfood.ca/

Lush Valley Food Action Society (Comox Valley).
foodcomoxvalley.org/

Nechako Valley Food Network. www.nvfoodnetwork.ca/

North Thompson Food Coalition.
www.yellowheadcs.ca/Food%20Forum.htm

Okanagan Greens. www.okanagangreens.ca/

Powell River Food Security Project

Revelstoke Food Network. www.community-connections.ca/

Shuswap Food Action. www.shuswapfoodaction.ca/

Vancouver Food Policy Council.
vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/

Provincial

BC Association of Farmers' Markets. www.bcfarmersmarket.org/

BC Cattlemen's Association. www.cattlemen.bc.ca/default.htm

BC Food Processors Association. www.bcfpa.ca/

BC Food Systems Network. www.fooddemocracy.org

National

Food Secure Canada. foodsecurecanada.org/

Miscellaneous

Community Information

Community Mapping Network. cmnbc.ca/about-cmn

Fresh Choice Kitchens (BC community kitchens).
www.communitykitchens.ca

North Okanagan Food Portal. okanaganfood.ca/

Farmland Trusts

Farmland Trusts. The Land Conservancy of British Columbia.
(available January 2010)



Housing

Guidelines for the Provision of Seasonal Housing for Migrant Farm Workers in BC. Western Agriculture Labour Initiative.

www.walicanada.com/docs/BCSAWP_Guidelines.pdf

Regulating temporary farm worker housing in the ALR: Discussion paper and guidelines. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

Local Economy

Plugging the Leaks: Local economic development as if people and the planet mattered. www.pluggingtheleaks.org/index.htm

The Local Multiplier Effect. Go Local. Sonoma County.

sonomacounty.golocal.coop/stories/the_local_multiplier_effect/17/

Local Governments: Key partners in local meat production. BC Provincial Health Services Authority, 2009.

www.bcfpa.ca/documents/FactSheet%20-%20Local%20Governments%20Key%20Partners%20in%20Local%20Meat%20Production.pdf

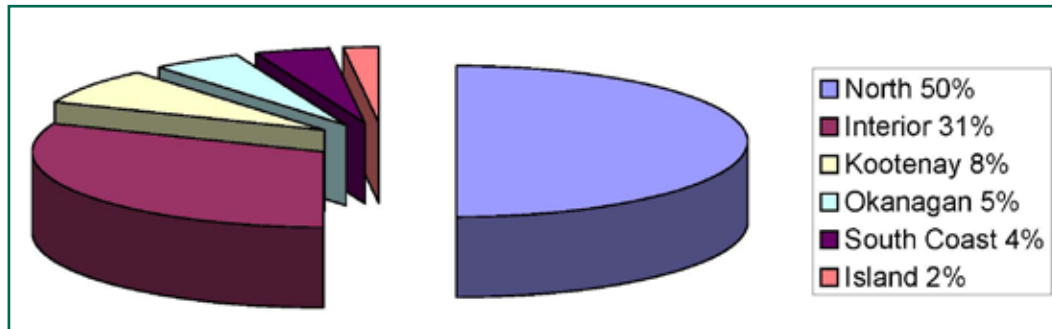


Figure 8. Percentage of Agricultural Land Reserve by region

Source: Agricultural Land Commission. 2008. Chart 1: Percentage of ALR by Region. Retrieved July 28, 2009 from www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/stats/Perc_ALR_by_Region.htm

Appendix A: Farming and Food Production in BC

In British Columbia's varied geography and climate, farmers produce over 250 different agricultural products for domestic consumption and export.⁷⁴ BC's farm businesses produce grain crops, tree fruits, berries, grapes, and vegetables, and include cow/ calf operations, turkey, chicken, and pork farms, and dairy and egg production.

Land base

BC has 3.5% of Canada's farmland.⁷⁵ Five percent of BC's land base is considered suitable for agriculture, and only 1% of that is high quality soil.⁷⁶ In 2008, BC had approximately 4.7 million hectares of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).⁷⁷ All 27 regional districts and 107 municipalities have land in the ALR⁷⁸ (see Figure 8, Percentage of Agricultural Land Reserve by region).

The total farm area in BC increased by 50% from 1.4 million hectares in 1931 to 2.8 million hectares in 2006. Early in the last century, farmers in the province worked on a large number of small farms. In 1931, there were 26,079 farms, with an average of 55 hectares per farm. By 2006, the number decreased to 19,844 farms, with an average of 143 hectares per farm.⁷⁹

74. Policy and Economics Branch. 2004. *The importance of agriculture and agri-food to British Columbia*. BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

75. Agriculture and Agri Food Canada. 2009. *Profile of production trends and environmental issues in Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector*. Retrieved August 1, 2009 from:
www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1237317119628&lang=eng.

76. Smart Growth BC. n.d. *Agricultural land*. Retrieved July 9, 2009 from
www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/AboutUs/Issues/AgriculturalLand/tabid/111/Default.aspx.

77. Agricultural Land Commission. 2009. Table 1: Area included and excluded from the ALR by year, in hectares.
www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/stats/Table1_incl-excl_allyears_d.htm

78. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. n.d. *Province of British Columbia Agriculture in Brief*. Retrieved August 1, 2009 from
www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/agbriefs/BC.pdf.

79. Statistics Canada. 2006. *British Columbia's farm population: Changes over a lifetime*. Retrieved July 28, 2009 from
www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/agpop/bc-cb-eng.htm.

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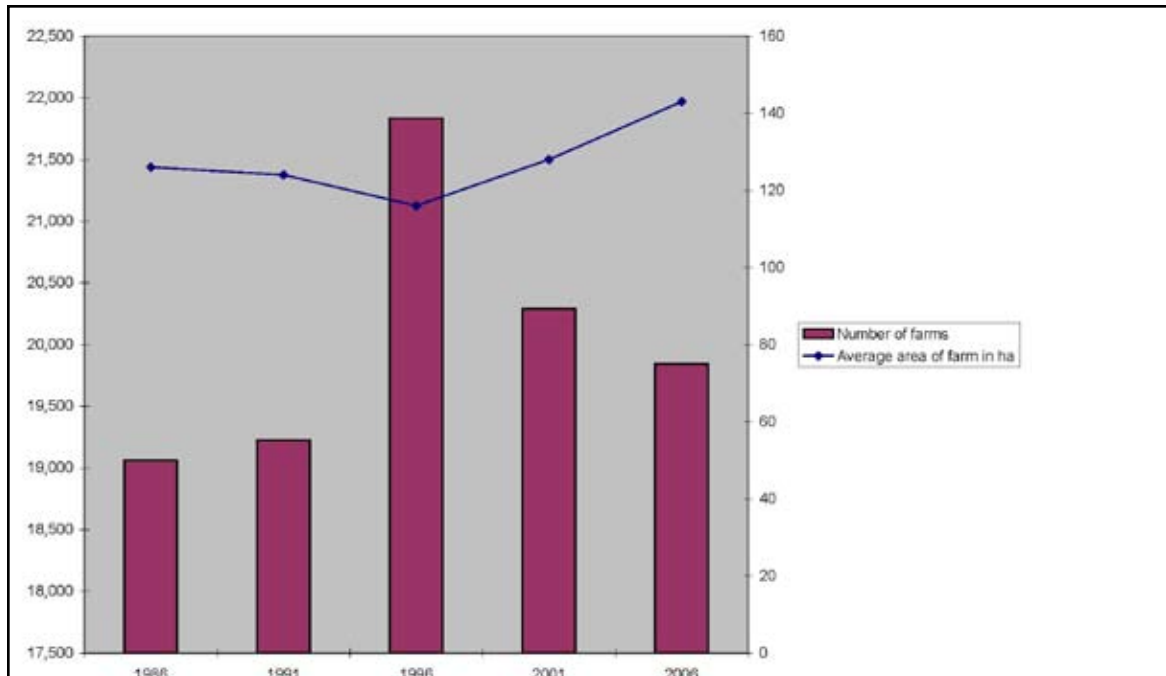


Figure 9. Number and average area of farms in BC (1986-2006)

Source: Statistics Canada. 2008. *Total farm area, land tenure and land in crops, by province* (Census of Agriculture, 1986 to 2006). (British Columbia). Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/agrc25k-eng.htm.

How much land does it take to feed one person?

It depends. A complex web of factors such as climate, soil, water, supporting ecosystems, production techniques, technology, type of diet, and caloric and nutrient requirements influence the answer to this question.

The Next Green Revolution: Its Environmental Underpinnings cites from *Soil Loss Accelerating Worldwide* by the Food and Agriculture Organization (1993):

- 0.5 hectares of arable land per person for sustainable food security with a North American/Western European diet. This estimate does not allow for any land degradation, and assumes adequate water supply.
- 0.07 hectares minimum of arable land per person, assuming a largely vegetarian diet, no land degradation, adequate water, absolutely minimal post-harvest waste, and that farmers can produce the maximum from the land (e.g. knowing precisely when and how to plant, fertilize, irrigate, manage pests).
- 0.25 hectares is the average amount of arable land available in most countries for food production.

It is estimated BC's population will reach 6,036,000 by 2036. This means that for BC to have 50% sustainable food self-sufficiency based on the estimate of 0.5 hectares/person, we will need approximately 1,509,00 hectares of arable land in production if there is no land degradation and there is adequate water.

Sources: BCStats. 2009. *British Columbia population projections 2009 to 2036*. Retrieved August 3, 2009 from www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DATA/pop/pop/project/BCtab_Proj0906.pdf; Myers, N. n.d. *The next green revolution: Its environmental underpinnings*. Retrieved August 3, 2009 from www.ias.ac.in/currsci/feb25/articles16.htm.

Farms and production

In 2006, there were 19,844 census farms in BC, a decline of 2% from 20,290 farms in 2001.⁸⁰ Overall, there was a sudden increase in the number of farms by 1996, and now we are experiencing a steady decline. As the number of farms declines, the average farm size increases (128 hectares in 2001 to 143 hectares in 2006, a change of 10%)⁸¹ (see Figure 9, Number and average area of farms in BC)

In comparison, in 2006 there were 229,373 farms in Canada, a decline of 7% from 246,923 farms in 2001. The average farm size in Canada increased 7% from 273 hectares in 2001 to 295 hectares in 2006.⁸²

Figure 10 shows that the greatest number of BC farms produce beef, fruit, and vegetables.

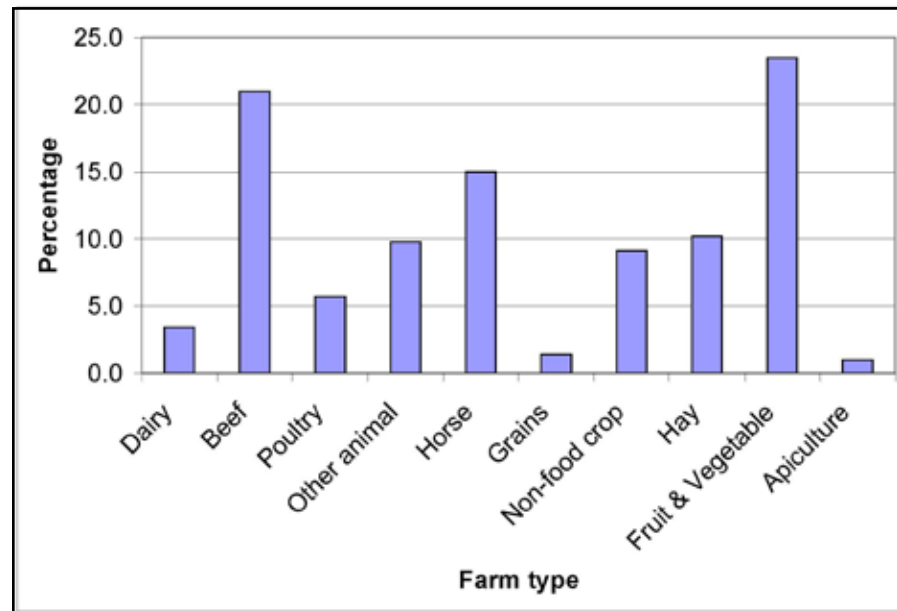


Figure 10. Percentage of BC census farms by type of operation (2006)

Source: Statistics Canada. 2008. Farms, by farm type and province (Census of Agriculture, 2001 and 2006) (British Columbia). Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/agrc35k-eng.htm.

80. Statistics Canada. 2006. *British Columbia's farm population: changes over a lifetime*. Retrieved July 28, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/agpop/bc-cb-eng.htm.

81. Statistics Canada. 2008. *Total farm area, land tenure and land in crops, by province (Census of Agriculture, 1986 to 2006) (British Columbia)*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/agrc25k-eng.htm.

82. Statistics Canada. 2006. *Farms, by farm type and province (Census of Agriculture, 2001 and 2006) (Canada)*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/agrc35a-eng.htm.

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A study in 2006 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands estimates that BC farmers produce 48% of all foods consumed in BC.⁸³ Table 6 shows the percent of total product consumed that is produced in BC.

Table 6. BC consumption of BC production⁸⁴

Product	% of total product grown in BC
Dairy, poultry, and egg products	90%
Vegetables	55%
Fruits	41%
Beef	50%

The majority of BC's produce is sold through wholesale distribution.

Table 7. Where BC produce goes⁸⁵

Product	Wholesale	Processing	Farm and roadside
Field vegetables	63%	18%	18%
Greenhouse vegetables	100%	–	–
Mushrooms	100%	–	–
Tree fruits	74%	21%	5%
Berry and nuts	19%	78%	3%

Demand for organic food in BC

While demand for certified organic food is growing in Canada, demand is greatest in BC.

BC has only 13% of Canada's population, but has 26% of Canadian certified organic food sales.

Source: Statistics Canada. 2009. *Organic: From Niche to Mainstream*. Retrieved August 16, 2009 from:

www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/96-325-x/2007000/article/10529-eng.htm

Farmers

There were 29,870 farm operators in BC in 2006, a decline of 1.5% from 2001. The median BC farm operator in 2006 was 53 years old.⁸⁶ The number of young farmers is declining in BC, and the overall farm population is aging (see Figure 11, Age of BC farm operators).

From 1931 to 2006, the number of BC citizens living on a farm dropped from 1 in 7 to 1 in 68.⁸⁷

83. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. 2006. *BC's food self-reliance: Can BC's farmers feed our growing population?*

84. Zbeetnoff, D. 2009. *Overview of BC's Food Economy*. Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental Consulting, 2009 BC Land Summit, Whistler, BC.

85. *ibid*

86. Statistics Canada. 2006. *British Columbia's farm population: changes over a lifetime*. Retrieved July 28, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/agpop/bc-cb-eng.htm.

87. *ibid*

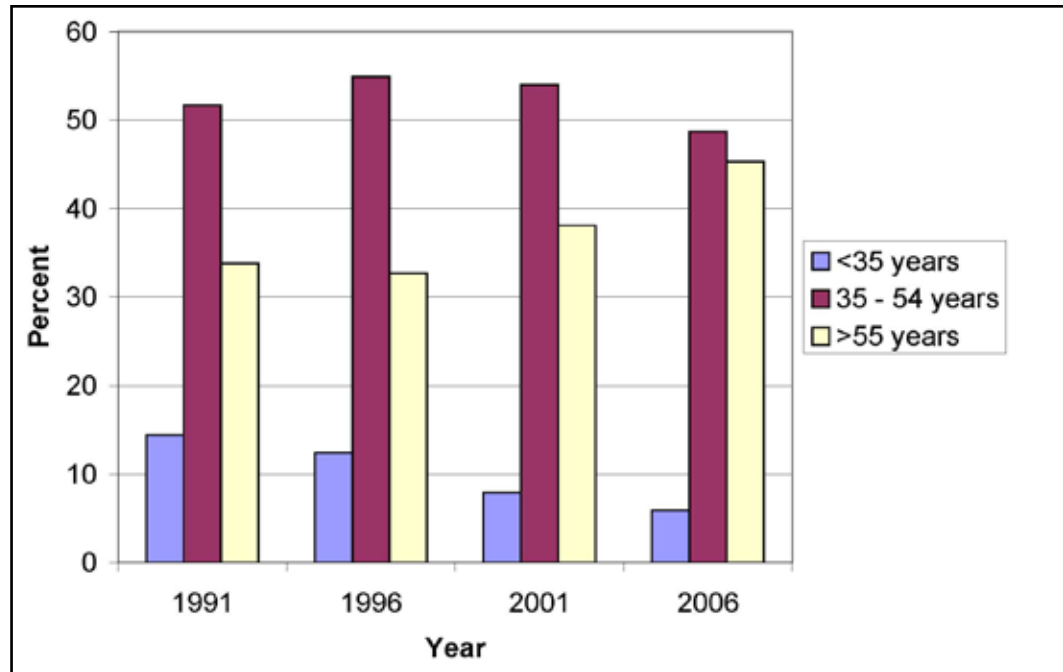


Figure 11. Age of BC farm operators

Source: Statistics Canada. 1996. *Profile of farm operators classified by occupation and sex, 1991 and 1996, British Columbia*. Retrieved July 28, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra/apr26-avr26/bc-cb1-eng.htm.

Statistics Canada. 2006. *Farm operators by sex and age, by province (2001 and 2006 Census of Agriculture) British Columbia*. Retrieved July 28, 2009 from www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/agrc18k-eng.htm.

Farm finances

BC farms stayed steady at \$0.90 of expenses for every dollar earned from 1995 to 2005.⁸⁸ From 2001 to 2006, inflation on farm inputs rose more quickly than inflation on prices that farmers received for their products – 9.6% for inputs versus 4.2% for products sold. In Canada during the same period of time, farm input prices rose 8.6% while farm product prices rose 1.7%.⁸⁹

From 2004-2008, BC farm total net income has become negative and continues to decline, despite the increasing value of total cash receipts (see Figure 12, BC farm total cash receipts and total net income).

88. Statistics Canada. 2008. *The financial picture of farms in Canada*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/articles/finpicture-portrait-eng.htm.

89. Statistics Canada. 2008. *Census of Agriculture counts 19,844 farms in British Columbia*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/analysis-analyses/bc-cb-eng.htm#r2.

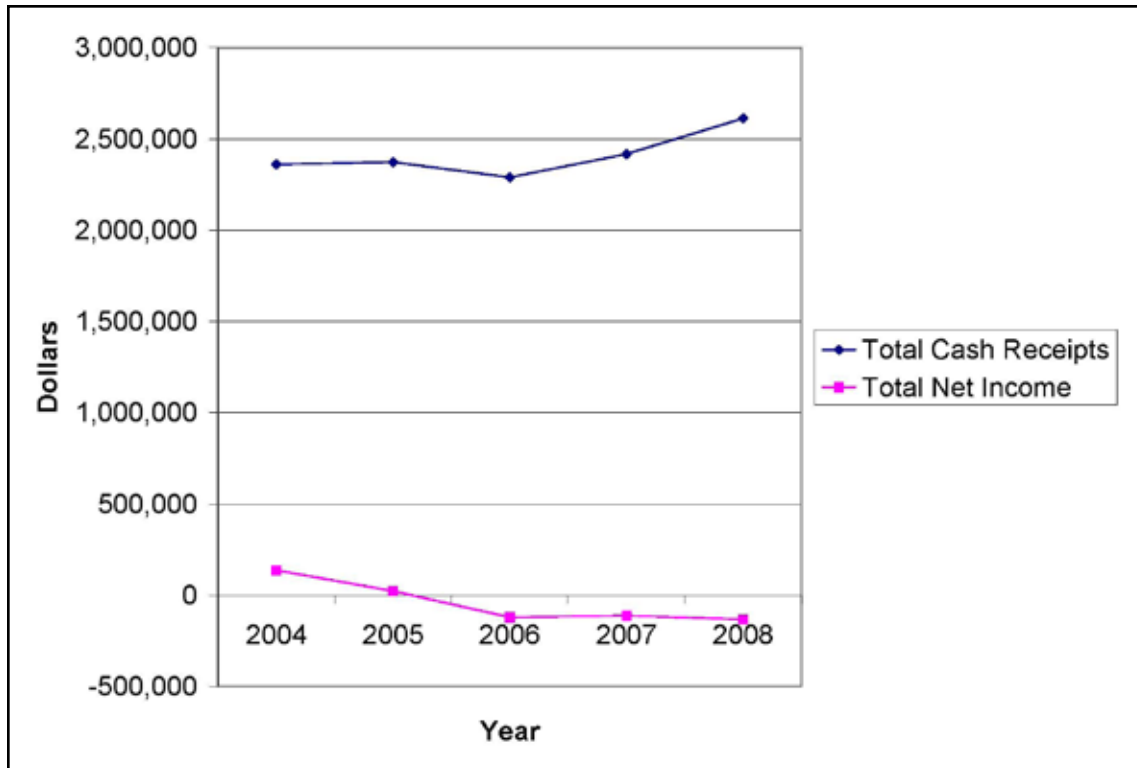


Figure 12. BC farm total cash receipts and total net income (2004-2008)

Source: Statistics Canada. 2009. *Net farm income, by province (British Columbia)*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/agri02j-eng.htm

While only 10.2% of BC farms have gross farm receipts over \$250,000, those farms account for 80.8% of the total gross farm receipts (2005).⁹⁰

54.9% of all farm operators had an off-farm job or business in 2005. In Canada, 48.4% of farm operators had an off-farm job or business.⁹¹

In 2008, Canadians spent about 11% of their income on food. Although the price of food has risen, Canadians pay a relatively low percentage of total household expenditures for food compared to consumers in other developed countries. In fact, the amount of household expenditures allocated for food steadily declined from 1981 to 2005.⁹²

90. Statistics Canada. 2008. *Census of Agriculture counts 19,844 farms in British Columbia*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/analysis-analyses/bc-cb-eng.htm#r2.

91. *ibid*

92. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2009. *Canadian consumers*. Retrieved August 22, 2009 from www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1170942402619&lang=eng#2.

While some basic Canadian food products have changed significantly in retail price from 1981 to 2005, there has been a much smaller change in the price producers receive for their goods. For example, a sirloin steak rose in price by \$6.47 per kilogram while the price received by the farmer only rose by \$0.27 per kilogram. The price of a box of corn flakes increased by \$1.96, while the price of corn decreased by \$0.01 per box.⁹³

Environmental farm practices

Farmers in BC use government and non-government programs to mitigate the impact of their activities on the environment. Farmers enhance environmental contributions from their farmland through activities such as wildlife habitat protection and rangeland management.

In 2008, over 700 BC producers participated in the Environmental Farm Plan program, and completed 523 farm plans on 256,687 acres. They completed 550 beneficial management practices projects⁹⁴, with approximately \$3,500,000 provided to support projects.⁹⁵ Overall, about 2000 Environmental Farm Plans have been completed in BC since 2003.⁹⁶

BC farmers also participate in:

- Agriculture Environment Initiatives (www.ardcorp.ca/index.php?page_id=16)
- Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust – Stewardship Programs (www.deltafarmland.ca/)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada – Partners in Wetland and Wildlife (www.ducks.ca/resource/landowner/)
- The Land Conservancy of BC – Conservation Partners Program (www.conservancy.bc.ca/content.asp?sectionid=161)
- Local Food Plus (www.localfoodplus.ca)

93. Martz, D.J.F. 2006. *The Farmers' Share: Compare the Share Update 2006*. Centre for Rural Studies and Enrichment, St. Peter's College, Saskatchewan.

94. The most popular beneficial management practices project categories are: Preventing Wildlife Damage, Irrigation Management, and Product and Waste Management.

95. BC Agricultural Research and Development Corporation. n.d. *The B.C. Environmental Farm Plan Program for 2009-10 has begun!* Retrieved August 18, 2009 from www.ardcorp.ca/.

96. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. 2008. *The BC Agriculture Plan*. Retrieved August 18, 2009 from www.al.gov.bc.ca/Agriculture_Plan/2_challenges.html.

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Resources

2006 Community Profiles. Statistics Canada
(www26.statcan.ca:8080/AgrProfiles/cp06/PlaceSearch.action?request_locale=en)

Province of British Columbia Agriculture in Brief. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/agbriefs/BC.pdf)

2006 Census of Agriculture and Historical Comparisons. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
(www.gov.bc.ca/al/mediaroom/fastfacts/2007/2006_agriculture_census_colour.pdf)



Appendix B: Food Production and Climate Change

Official Community Plans “ . . . must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets”

Local Government Act Section 877(3)

Food production has several important interactions with greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

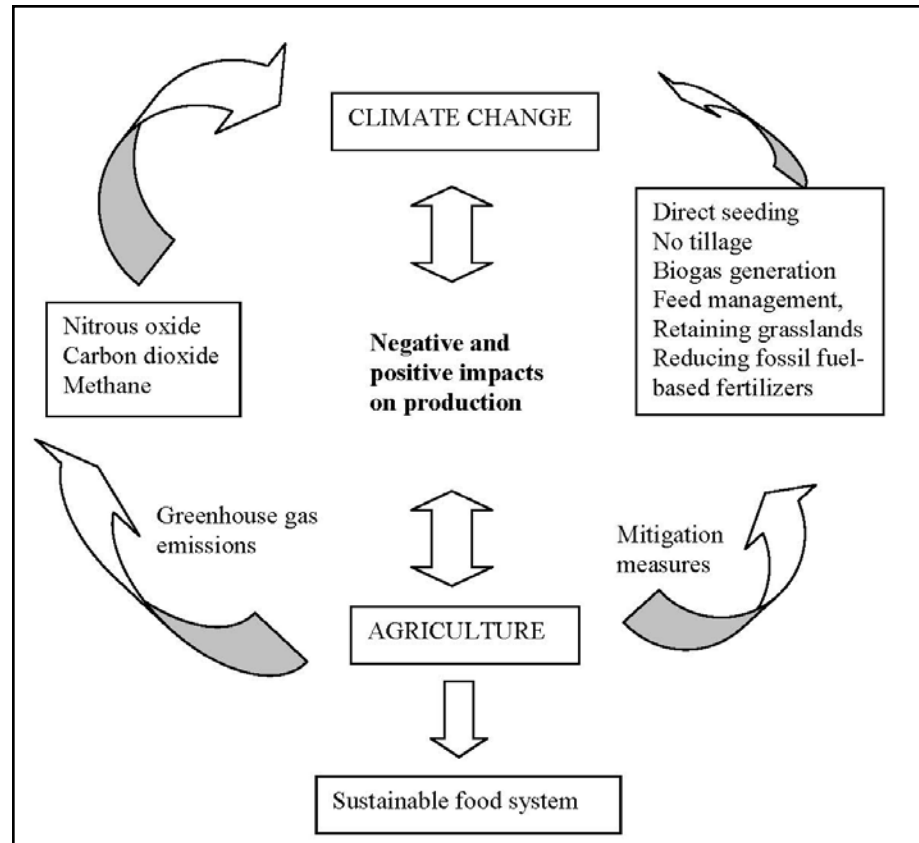


Figure 13. Food production and climate change

According to *Climate Change Mitigation: Tapping the Potential of Agriculture*, “(a)gricultural practices that improve land use and management through increasing and maintaining soil carbon stocks can generate multiple benefits, including climate change mitigation, increased agricultural and food production, pro-poor income generation, environmental services, and improved resilience/ adaptive capacity of farming systems.”⁹⁷

97. Mueller, A., Mann, W. & Lipper, L. March 2009. *Climate Change Mitigation: Tapping the Potential of Agriculture*. MEA Bulletin, Guest Article No. 65.

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A 2008 study by Christopher Weber and H. Scott Matthews demonstrates that greenhouse gas emissions associated with food are dominated by the production phase, rather than transportation. In the United States, production contributed to 83% of the average American household's 8.1 t CO₂e/ year footprint for food consumption, while transportation represented 11%.⁹⁸

As a local government, you may not readily see how managing food production and climate change fits within your jurisdiction. You may have limited resources to invest in measures that increase agriculture's resiliency to climate change. You may face public resistance to increased annual tax rates to fund strategies that address uncertain changes in climate.

Communities are more likely to support activities that result in immediate gain than those that deal with future impacts and are difficult to conceptualize. However, there are tools local government can utilize to decrease agriculture-related greenhouse gas emissions, encourage farm practices that mitigate climate change, and build a food system that is resilient to climate fluctuations.

You can implement measures that do not require immediate financial investment. You can revise your Official Community Plan to incorporate policies that support sustainable food production. For example, you can add edge planning policies to establish hedgerows and natural areas around farmland. These edges act as carbon sinks, corridors for wildlife, and habitat for crop pollinators. They also moderate local climate and reduce soil erosion.⁹⁹

Use these Tools to support sustainable agriculture, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and create resilient communities:

- Tool 6: Official Community Plans
- Tool 15: Riparian Area Tax Exemption
- Tool 16: Water Management

98. Weber, C. & Matthews, H.S. 2008. *Food miles and the relative climate impacts of food choices in the United States*. Environ. Sci. Tech. 42(10), 3508-3513.

99. See Edge Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. (www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/edge/index.htm).

Appendix C: TLC Agriculture Program Publications

Publications are available at <http://blog.conservancy.bc.ca/>.

A Guide to Farmland Access Agreements: Leases, Profits à Prendre, Licences & Memoranda of Understanding. April 2009

Whole Farm Plan Guide. December 2009

Farm Succession Planning: Ways to Protect your Farmland for Future Generations. January 2010

Farmland Trusts: Communities Supporting Farmland, Farming and Farmers. January 2010

BC's Farming and Food Future: Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production. December 2009

Community Farms Program: Feasibility Study. September 2008

Community Farms in BC: Building Local Food Systems for Sustainable Communities.
Community Farms Survey Report – A collaborative effort between FarmFolk/CityFolk, The Land Conservancy of BC, and Simon Fraser University. Dr. Hannah Wittman, Simon Fraser University, March 2009.

BC's Farming and Food Future: Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production
The Land Conservancy of British Columbia
Victoria, BC
December 2009